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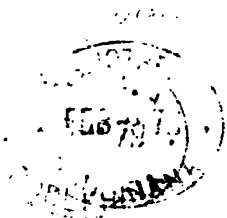
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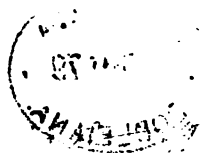


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FAITH: SERVICE: RECOMPENSE.

THREE SERMONS.

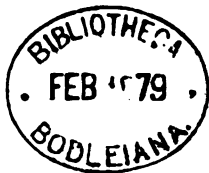
BY

THOMAS PINCHES, M.A.,

Curate of Portsoken with St. Pierre.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE

(After a Photograph by Charles Watkins).



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PREFACE.



REAT is the company of the preachers who address themselves through the Press to the world : small the company of those whom the world to hear doth seriously incline.

Sermons issued singly, for the most part make ignominious descent into the depths of the waste-paper basket : artfully collected into a volume, they attain, unread, the inglorious elevation of the upper shelf. Such being the case, the homilist, who, without warrant of ecclesiastical position or literary

prestige, risks an addition to the number of the rejected addresses, may be fairly challenged at the outset, to 'render a reason.'

When Bunyan courted the verdict of his *confrères*, on the 'scribble' with which he had beguiled his 'vacant seasons' of cell-life, in Bedford Gaol,

'Some said, John, print it ; others said, Not so :
Some said, It might do good ; others said, No.'

This divided counsel the allegorist found perplexing. Yet had there been no perplexity, had there been no encouragement ; and, fortunately for multitudes, to whom the product of the tinker's penmanship has come, as, in some sort, a new revelation, illustrating and enforcing the Old, and whose minds it has stirred with brave pilgrim purpose, John gave his scribblement the benefit of the doubt, and straightway betook himself to the man of types, saying, 'I print it will.' And, lo ! the marvellous Dream hath set the wakeful printing presses of many lands in motion.

The title of the following sufficiently commonplace pages, to take that kind of prominence which the typographer bestows, has not been determined by the casting vote of the writer, on finding equal the placets and non-placets of a quorum. The 'author's apology,' in the present instance, is founded on a promise to place in the hands of personal acquaintance, a legible rendering of certain mystic signs, which were orally interpreted, in the discharge of a humble ministry, the Sunday after Bishop Wilberforce's funeral. The said signs consisted of those vowelless outlines, by means of which the shorthand writer deftly symbolizes thought.

Now, it will, no doubt, be readily conceived that scribes who have become habituated to stenographic methods, may find the elaboration of fac-similes, by dint of longhand transcription, somewhat specially tedious; and the present writer, accordingly, claims such indulgence as may be given to the naive confession, that the desire to fulfil the pact to which reference has been made, without too heavy a tax upon his own time and patience, was the motive power

that impelled him, in the matter of this discursive preachment,—of whose diversities of defect he must himself, in his degree, be conscious,—to Bunyan's resolve,—‘ I print it will.’

‘ That lack of pence which vexes public men,’—a financial fret not unknown to stipendiary curates,—rendered a very long period of pause convenient, not to say indispensable, to the writer, before committing himself to the actual publication of a work which, having from the first, slight prospect of more remunerative circulation, was intended chiefly for private distribution.

Without assuming that an opuscle of this description will be traversed, in the exercise of their art, by those who make a speciality of criticism, it may be proper to state that, when reproducing ideas and impressions for a small constituency of *readers*, a greater latitude of thought, and withal, a less severe simplicity in the drapery of language, was deemed permissible, than when seeking to edify congregants assembled for the purposes of Public Worship, within the confines of a village church.

With some misgiving as to the soundness of judgment displayed in the step, a laggard craft is launched on the reflux wave of ephemeral literature. Unfortunately, it takes not the tide 'at the flood;' yet may there be friendly people ashore, to wish it 'a fair wind, and a good offing!' A single plank floating by, has, ere now, buoyed up till he reached the shallows, a human waif who was ready to perish. The Great Teacher made a little ship His pulpit, and thence discoursed divinely to listeners who had thronged Him on the strand.

Across an inland sea, in a frail bark, a Form, sleep-zoned, is borne. The sun goes down in cloud : up springs the gale ! The spirits of the storm awake : the Master slumbers still. Forthwith, the appeal, the clutch, of men who 'perish' in their prime. Ah, faithless and distraught ! 'Perish,' with *Christ* on board ? Oh, memory treacherous of His power ! Rebuking first the elemental strife, He waves the tempest down :— 'Peace ; be still !' Strange Sovereignty ! The vassal winds collapse : the frightened skiff preens off encroaching surge, and swan-like

glides o'er moonlit track of silver sheen ! Next, chiding mild, the Saviour questions of their fears :—Why are ye so fearful ? How is it that ye have no faith ? Well, one day, ye shall have much, and strong, to smile unblanched on Death, if JESUS CHRIST be nigh ! The tempest now is hushed :—let timorous and troubled hearts reflect the halcyon calm.

Mariners there are, their compass gone, their reckoning lost, ' sailing o'er life's solemn main ; '—no Passenger emberthed, whom winds and waves obey ;—nor pilot hails, to guide them to the port of peace :—eyes, straining for a sail, see naught but phantom-woven shrouds, in wreaths of ocean mist. O Thou, who bringest men,—sometimes by feeble craft in Thy commission strong,—unto their desired haven, deign to accompany with Thy Presence and Blessing this mimic sail ! Thus chartered, and thus benisoned, the spiritual conquest it brings home, may more than realize the hope and prayer, with which the builder bids it venture on the deep.



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SERMON I.

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SERMON I.



SAMUEL WILBERFORCE.

FAITH: SERVICE: RECOMPENSE.

ACTS XIII. 36, 37.

'For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.'



E 'learn more from living exemplar than from preceptive utterance.' Herein resides the perpetual fitness of Bible Stories to instruct:—they impress great lessons, by the portrayal of great men's lives.

The worthies of old time are so vividly sketched by the Great Limner, that they affect us, the

children of a later economy, as conscious forms, starting from the canvas on which the Hand Divine hath painted them. There is no history that can enter into rivalry with Scripture, for power to grave its characters on the tablet-heart of Youth, or to ensure the transcript of childhood's trust, 'writ large,' in the illumined fidelities of Age ; because there is no history that can compare with Scripture, for the strong human interest with which it clothes its heroes, or for the unaffected dignity with which it tells the truth. We perceive that the Archive does not lie, to shield a Patriarch from shame, or God's chosen from reproach.

In history, styled profane, the notabilities of a remote antiquity loom nebulously upon us from an atmosphere of myth. Traditions have been promoted by the Muse of History, and glorified in Song, of fabulous demi-gods, the blazon of whose deeds ministered to the pride, and excited the patriotism of a people that was taught to assign its origin to warriors so preternaturally sublime. Notwithstanding the large credulity, from which the wisest of our race, under and after the dawn

of history, were not exempt, such legends were often adhibited, not alone by poet, rhapsodist, and rhetorician, but by historian, philosopher, and legislator, with full perception of a spurious heraldry, which they were not always at pains to conceal. Even when no *primâ facie* improbability may appear in the chronicles of eld, if there exist no materials for comparative investigation, there are no authentications of belief. Save where light streams in from the torch of Scripture, a veil undiaphanous baffles the sight, and there is no open vision.

But such is the self-evidencing force of the Scriptures of Truth, that the notices of the world's 'grey fathers,' which the Holy Ghost hath indited,—thick-sown, as they are, with prodigy,—seem practically unaffected by the mists of interposing centuries. The objects presented are felt to be human, though moving in a mysterious Presence, and penetrated with a Divine Influence; real, though manifoldly marvellous; nigh, though far; for Faith—whose province is the Past, as well as the Future,—puts into our hands a telescope which brings

them near. We thus behold the ancient dead pursuing the avocations of the living, playing their several parts on the broad stage of Sacred Story, and re-presenting the scenes of a pilgrimage over which the solemn Shadow crept thousands of years ago. The sense of personality, of identity of nature, and of a substantially homogeneous experience is so keen, that it can but deepen into intenser realization, if the privilege be one day ours to sit with Patriarchs and Prophets as guests at the Paschal Feast, which the Seer of Patmos in prophetic vision saw.

Now, as we propose to give our views of one, the experience of whose life was greatly diversified in the colourings of praise and blame, it may be worth while to anticipate the objection that we deal too much with the rose tint, and too little with pigments of more sombre hue.

Will it not, then, be conceded, even by those who, while he fulfilled his course here below, thought hardly of him who was, in

truth, one of the best-abused of men, that it may be well now to indulge the instinctive feeling, by turning our regards to those elements in the character, and actings in the life, of the departed, which may be didactic of that which is good? Excellencies, gifts, services,—these constitute the theme on which, we presume, it becomes us immediately to dilate; and, if we decline to attribute, on the assumptions of party, such radical defects as would go far to make a wonderful life a wonderful enigma, you will not suppose that we are so foolish, or so dishonest, as to desire to lead up to the inference that the man of whom we speak had no defects at all. Blemishes, undoubtedly, there *were*,—there are spots on the sun's bright disc,—which Argus eyes were eager to detect, and at which hands Briarean were swift to point. 'In many things we offend all.' The late Bishop was not without offence. It is far from our wish—though the esteem for his memory, which, with the mass of our countrymen we share, is, of course, unfavourable to a frigid impari-

ality,—to do a hurt to the thorough humanness of the life he lived amongst men, by representing it as divinely immaculate. Yet, if, in such eclectic retrospect as may be given from the pulpit, we speak smooth things of him whose race is run, it will not follow of necessity that we set forth deceits.

If, with such materials for the study, as are, at present, ready to your hand, you will consider him who has been suddenly snatched away, we have no fear that you will reach any other conclusion than that his 'infirmities' were simply such as are characteristic of imperfect Christian men. In his high sacerdotalism you will see registered the revulsion he experienced on passing, at a critical and impressive age, from the traditionary influences of Clapham, into that rarefied air which those enthusiastic priests respired, who stirred with new forces the pulses of ecclesiastical life. His faults you will now at least, extenuate, as having been those which are slow to be eradicated from a warm, impetuous nature—a nature answering, in some salient features, to that of

Peter, the Disciple of quick action, who, at one time, shreds off the ear of Malchus ; at another, flings himself into the sea. We believe that if Christ had openly pressed upon the Prelate now deceased, the question He thrice propounded to Simon, ' Lovest thou Me ? ' he, no less than the son of John (so the name should be given), would have replied to the Searcher of hearts, ' Lord ! Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee.' And, like the Disciple who became a Bishop of the Church in primitive times, this Bishop of the Church in modern, proved his love, by diligently feeding and shepherding Christ's lambs and sheep, till the pastoral staff fell, so to say, from his death-stricken hand.

Certainly, we are aware of no evidence to compel the admission, that the man upon whose career we would moralize, was a 'time-server,' in the invidious sense to which that verbal compound has been long confined. In its earlier and better meaning—*serving the time*,—the epithet—often used as a pelting-stone by his enemies,—describes him exactly ; and is

implied of David, in the eulogy of the text. Our judgments, if they could be more generous, would be occasionally more just. He who rehearsed for our improvement, the histories of Bible worthies, passed not by their sins, whether of ignorance or of wilfulness, because He could read the heart, as well as interpret the actions; and, indeed, it may be, oftener than we are prone to think, indispensable to do the reading, ere we venture on the mal-interpretation.

Without, then, resigning ourselves to the fond hallucinations of hero-worship, or ascribing to the illustrious departed, any imaginary graces;—unreserved in our acknowledgment that ‘every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above;’—forgetting not that the Gospel which we preach, brings within the emprise of the humblest believer, things more to be desired than the eloquence of the orator, the tact and skill of the administrator, the ready resource of the debater, the acumen of the reviewer, the brilliancy of the wit, and all the rich endowments of genius;—we may seek to glorify God in

His servant, and stir up the gift that is in us, by the contemplation of a character sublime. We may find refreshing a few fair notices of a life which, if, in our opinion, it nourished some ecclesiastical products of a less wholesome kind, we may still allow to have been singularly fertile in 'the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God,'—the life of SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, late BISHOP of WINCHESTER.

The text, in its original connection, gives scope for many sermons, for it impinges on many mysteries. The verses occur, as you will have perceived, in St. Paul's Sabbath-day's address to the men of Israel, and devout fearers of God,—proselytes of the Gentiles,—assembled in the synagogue of the Pisidian Antioch. Preacher, scene, and audience are attractive by reason of an interest which must not delay us now.

The Apostle gives a brief *résumé* of such events in Jewish annals as might propitiate the jealous prejudice, and conciliate the attention,

of his Hebrew brethren; and at the same time, serve to introduce his argument in support of the claims of One who came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. He testifies that God, according to His promise, had raised unto Israel, of the seed of David, a Saviour, Jesus; that the Lord's advent had been heralded, as the Prophet Malachi had predicted it would be, by a precursor; that, notwithstanding His credentials, and the confluence of all rills of Messianic prophecy in the time and the Man, the Nazarene had met with no national recognition. On the contrary, the dwellers at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets, had condemned Him, and slain, after having signally failed to fasten on Him any crime for which it behoved Him to die. The speaker then brings his hearers to the Resurrection, the great substantiating fact in the Christian system, the guiding pole-star of New Testament discourse.

That part of his exposition in which the preacher makes mention of the ministration of

David, and observes that his earthly service had an end by reason of death, now supplies us, as we think, with an appropriate text.

The Apostle, in these verses, institutes a Contrast between David as corruptible, and Jesus as Incorruptible. St. Paul has just made a citation from the Sixteenth Psalm,—a citation which St. Peter, in an address which you will find recorded in the Second Chapter of this Book of the Acts, had made more at length.

David, in that Psalm, had said, 'Thou wilt not leave My Soul in Hell;'—the word used being Sheol (שְׁאוֹל), to which answers the word which St. Peter employs, Hades (ᾗδης), and here designates the region where disembodied spirits await resurrection;—'neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.'

Now, as St. Peter was careful to note, in the discourse referred to, 'The Patriarch David, . . . being a Prophet, . . . spake of the Resurrection of *Christ*, that His Soul was not left in Hades, neither His Flesh did see corruption.'

Two things, then, are, it would seem, in the

Sixteenth Psalm, presignified of the Messiah ; two exemptions from the experiences of those of whose nature He should partake, and whose guilt, personally Innocent, He should bear ;—the one exemption being that His Soul should not be left in Hades ; the other, that His Flesh should not see corruption. As descriptive of David's own posthumous destiny, the quoted words are, indeed, contradicted by St. Peter. David's soul, in common with the souls of ordinary men, *was* left in Hades ; ' For *David* is not ascended into the Heavens,' as he would be, if the prediction had received its fulfilment in himself. The assertion of the Psalmist could only be taken as prophetic of One whose exit from that blissful division of Hades which is called Paradise, would be so little delayed, that the Soul would re-enter the Body,

' Before Decay's effacing fingers
Had swept the lines where beauty lingers.'

' For David, having in his own generation served, or ministered to, the will of God,'—so we prefer to translate,—' fell asleep, and was

laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption ; But He,' says the Apostle, 'whom God raised again, saw no corruption.' And, inasmuch as Jesus—His Divine Mission, by many infallible signs authenticated, and the life which He had power to lay down, and power to take again, resigned,—was proved by an ineffable blending of miracle and witness,—evidence which Jewish rulers vainly thought to falsify,—to have returned from Hades, to have taken again His Body, yet untainted of corruption, and to have ascended with that Body into Heaven, there appeared to be no real room for doubt that this Incorruptible Man was God's Holy One, the promised Messiah ; and therefore,—His work on earth being vicarious, perfect, and accepted, —through Him the forgiveness of sins might be preached.

Without entering further, into the precise nature and force of this argument, let us,

I. *Briefly analyze the character and history of Bishop Wilberforce ; and give our reasons for saying of him, as was said of David, 'In*

his own generation, he served the Will of God.'
And,

II. In subsequent discourses, *Pursue such reflections as may seem adapted to constrain us, in this respect, to follow the Bishop's example.*

I. We seek not to gain a hold on your sensibilities, by lifting the curtain that has fallen on a sharp, short, and painful tragedy ; but it may profit us, now that the Bishop is gone, if we endeavour to put aside any existent party animus, and give ourselves to a succinct examination of the Bishop's character and history. Let us strive in some slight measure to realize what kind of man he was,—how, in the earnest battle of life he bore himself ; and we think his life of service, and its abrupt close, may be found appropriate as matter of Sabbath meditation ; and, by God's blessing, provide us with instruction and encouragement, with warning and with comfort.

The third son of that illustrious Emancipator,

who stirred the generous heart of England to banish from her empire the spirit of Slavery, and give co-extensive sovereignty to the spirit of Freedom, Samuel Wilberforce inherited the charm of a great name, linked with that sympathy, that energy, that animation, that ability, that commanding and persuasive eloquence, which were among the forces that combined to stamp the name indelibly on a bright page of history. But, while sire and son were thus similarly endowed, the contrast between them, in the views they cherished on matters theological, was great and striking. William Wilberforce was, in some respects, as much Puritan as Prelatist; and, with Zachary Macaulay—the father of the brilliant historian—was a member of the literary and philanthropic Society, which was somewhat sneeringly designated ‘The Clapham Sect.’ Samuel Wilberforce, going up to Oxford when the reaction in favour of High Church doctrine was setting strongly in, was borne along with the current, and was known thenceforward, as an Anglican sacramentalist of the historic priestly school.

Of his University course suffice it to say that it was so run as to lead those who watched it, and who drew the horoscope of his future, to predict for him great things ; and that it appropriately closed with a degree in double honours.

Devoting himself to the service of God in the English Church, he entered, at the earliest canonical age, into Holy Orders ; being licensed in the year 1828, to the curacy of Checkendon, an inconsiderable village near Henley-on-Thames. The year of his ordination was also the year of his marriage. In 1830 he became Rector of Brighstone, a country parish in the Isle of Wight. In 1837 he was appointed Select Preacher to the University of Oxford. In practical force, in dramatic intensity, in wealth of illustration, and in other factors in effective preaching, the several series of discourses, the first of which he then commenced, and which have taken a permanent place in homiletic literature, bore comparison even with those wonderful prelections, by means of which, when occupying the same position of leverage, the renowned and influential John Henry

Newman was wont to elevate and mould the Oxford mind.

Samuel Wilberforce was now distinctly marked out for promotion. In no walk of life could he have remained in obscurity ; for the rays of his genius would have diffused ambrosial morn where thickest shadows gather. Upon such gifts, so utilized, success came swiftly and of course. In 1839 he became Archdeacon of Surrey ; in 1840, Canon of Winchester, and Chaplain to Prince Albert ; and, in the same year, Rector of Alverstoke, an important parish near Gosport, which was at that time within its bounds.

Then came the cloud. In 1841, in the Close of Winchester, Mrs. Wilberforce died. This event shadowed the joyous life for a while ; and doubtless the trial, being accepted as a ministry of rough but salutary chastening, helped to shape into yet more exceeding humanness the character. It had a further effect, which involved benefit to the world at large,—leaving him whose chief domestic tie was broken, free to throw himself, with greater absorption of time and thought, into his life's work.

As an Archdeacon, he entered into the duties of his office—not a few of which he was the first to idealize—with a thoroughness and ardour quite phenomenal in those times. As Rector of a parish, large and not very compact, he laboured with conspicuous zeal and ability. As a Preacher, he was already known to fame ; and Alverstoke Church became the place of sacred tryst for numbers, who were drawn thither from a distance, to profit by the warning, the consolation, the instruction in righteousness, which formed the never-failing staple of his varied and impassioned appeals.

Well equipped himself, and owing much—though not, in the event, symbolizing with the paternal teacher,—to the exceptionally careful religious culture he had received from his pious and eloquent father, he recognized the need of more systematic training than was then normally accessible for those who intended to devote themselves to the ministry of the Church of England. Accordingly, he found time at Alverstoke, to give such training to candidates for Orders, who came and resided with him or with his curates.

Feeling ever an absorbing interest in the spiritual needs of destitute districts, Archdeacon Wilberforce had already begun to take action in the direction of church building,—the church of St. Thomas, Elson, and that of St. Matthew, at Gosport, being its immediate fruit.

But Wilberforce could not be spared to Alverstoke long. In 1844 he was appointed Sub-Almoner to the Queen, and Dean of Westminster; and in 1845, found himself robed in episcopal lawn, and consecrated SAMUEL, by Divine permission LORD BISHOP of OXFORD.

The year of the new Bishop's consecration witnessed the condemnation of 'Ward's Ideal'; the uproar occasioned by the Maynooth grant; and the judgment passed upon Mr. Oakeley, who, in the same year, seceded to the Church of Rome, into whose communion he was received, together with Mr. Newman, by Dr. (afterwards Cardinal) Wiseman. It was a time of reinvigorated, but not altogether healthy, Church life. The ecclesiastical world was unsettled and excited, to a degree almost beyond realization,

even with the lights of High Ritualism now. The foundations seemed to be shifting, and about to be destroyed. The epidemic influences of the 'Catholic Revival' were in the air. Perversions to the Church of Rome from the ranks of the Anglican Clergy, were numerous and on the increase. The hearts of those whose desire it was that 'The Reformed Church' might vindicate that title, and 'stand in her lot at the end of the days,' were failing them for fear.

At a time when there was a distinct emergency—as God often appoints—the man who was best fitted to meet it, and that, too, in the plane of its rise, stepped prominently upon the scene. It was a clear gain to the English Church, that so practical and gifted a leader should come forward at this particular crisis, to head the High Church party ; to recall men from monkish speculation, from cloistered brooding over patristic and scholastic lore ; and, by giving them an abundance of work to do, fix their loyalty to the Church in whose service it was done.

It has been often said of Bishop Wilberforce, that the pressure of his influence was an eccen-

tric pressure, a centrifugal tendency, in the direction of Rome. And there can be no question that, in giving expression and effect to his convictions, he thought right to say and do much that was certain to be so regarded by a party. It is quite to be expected that those who have embraced High Anglican views, will appear to the disciples of an opposite school, to be more or less infected with the miasma of Rome. It is, further, to be assumed that High Churchmen who become unsettled in opinion, will, as a rule, find their logical ultimatum in the Roman system ; as the wavering amongst Low Churchmen may be expected to find theirs in some faith and discipline of Protestant Dissent. The danger was involved in the nature of those sacerdotal concepts which High Anglicans have from the first,—not without explicitness of reasoning—held to be those of their Church ; and, instead of augmenting, Bishop Wilberforce did much, by his absorbing claims upon practical activity, to minimize it, both for himself and others. He was not insensible to the danger ; but he identified it with that to which, however

correct in themselves, all opinions and feelings, when not kept within bounds by watchfulness and prayer, stand exposed,—the danger of *excess*. Hence we find him often admonishing his Clergy to be on their guard against any leaning towards Rome. It is certain that he deepened and perpetuated the loyalty of many earnest and enthusiastic minds, imbued with the revived ‘Church principles,’—minds which might have gone hopelessly astray, had they found none in high places, bold to recognize, and firm to enunciate, those principles, and skilled to indicate the lines which, in their view, marked them off from the Roman theory.

While the Bishop’s sympathies had their rallying point in the High Anglican party, they were certainly capable of expansion beyond it; *so* capable as to render the Bishop amenable, in the judgment of the martinets, purists, and precisians of the schools, to the charge of *mala fides*. His own warm-heartedness became the *open sesame* to the hearts of those in concert with whom he desired to work, and who might be disposed to isolate themselves, because his

theological outlook differed from their own. Having a wonderful genius for strategic generalship and administrative finesse, he turned the flank of innumerable difficulties, and absorbed into his plans of usefulness, as elements of furtherance, what men not easily baffled, might have accepted as elements of unnegotiable obstruction. He knew how to make concessions gracefully, and yet gain substantially his point. The *suaviter in modo* deprived of all harshness, and so made effective, the *fortiter in re*. Hence the incertitude of some good men, whether it was 'for the Gospel's sake,' or for objects more worldly, that he 'was made all things to all men;' and hence the sneers of some perhaps not so good, who stood upon their own fleece, and whom it suited to cry him down.

Clergymen of the old Evangelical persuasion might work with recognition and satisfaction under the diocesan *régime* of Bishop Wilberforce. Once assured of loyalty to the Church of England,—of the absence of any conscious Romanizing or Rationalistic views,—the Bishop

would brook a very considerable variety of speculative opinion. If it were otherwise, he would place no confidence in one whose position as an English Churchman, he failed to understand.

His disbelief in the doctrine, the ritual, the polity of the Latin Church, was strong, in precise proportion to his belief in what he conceived to be the doctrine, the ritual, the polity of the Anglican. It could scarcely have been stronger. The Church of Rome as a religious system, he detested : the Church of England he loved with all his soul. The uncompromising Anglican line he took,—as, for example, at the crisis marked by the Papal Aggression,—together with his published Charges and Sermons, should have put this beyond the reach of cavil or of doubt.

Though by no means a surface theologian, he was a worker, an organizer, far more than a subtle dialectician, or deep thinker. From first to last, with all his gifts of imagination and of eloquence, he was a thoroughly practical, duty-doing man. Much that would have been

Utopian in men of ordinary calibre, was quite within his range. His career seems, as we look back upon it now, to illustrate the course of half-a-dozen useful lives in one—so multifarious were his talents, so hardy and elastic that physical constitution, which seemed equal to any strain. With extraordinary energy he threw himself into everything he undertook. What he undertook might be regarded, in the main, as an accomplished fact. *Nil molitur inepte*. The diocese of Oxford, when he became its Bishop, was comparatively poor in educational and religious institutions : at his translation to Winchester he left it surpassingly rich. Some of these we shall take leave to tabulate hereafter. At present, we proceed to offer a few remarks upon his general character ; and to enter a protest against the ungenerous way in which, as it appears to us, the less scrupulous, or more narrow, of his antagonists have adjudicated thereupon.

A man of cultured intellect ; with the means and ends of ripened years, retaining all the

inquisitiveness and receptiveness of a child ;
taking an interest which never flagged, in men,
in affairs, in studies,—even those least directly
allied to the high vocation on which he yet concentrated his greatest force ; a man of warm and tender fellowships, polite, affable, social, winning,—Samuel Wilberforce, like his Divine Master, ‘came eating and drinking,’ as well as preaching and praying. In him was seen no asceticism, no assumption of inaccessible, Pharisaic sanctity. A large-hearted being, in all phases of his manifestation, he moved loftily, but withal, courteously and genially, through difficult times. Of a nature in a high degree emotional and enthusiastic, he was not made to be the cool exponent of a colourless orthodoxy ; but an impetuous champion in the van of an extreme wing of the army ecclesiastical, wielding a weapon of well-tempered steel, that trembled with eagerness to try issues with all comers. In his heart of hearts, he was as much a soldier as a priest. ‘A man of war from his youth, . . . the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam ;’ and, had his lot fallen on

times when preaching and fighting went hand in hand, he had donned the cassock and the coat of mail together, and fared cheerfully forth, a hot Crusader, to Paynim lands. His spirit loved not privacy, and as for the quiet by-ways of life, they had but intermittent charms for him. He lived, as he loved to live, in public. Warm in his partisanship, outspoken and fearless in his utterances,—endowed, beyond almost all men of his time, with a rare genius for fervid oratory, he stood forth from among his compeers, a man of mark, a leader—to the manner born. He became the most trusted chief of his party, and, till the day of his death, did battle for it, within the limits which conscience and judgment imposed, loyally and well. No carpet-knight, he loved a foeman worthy of his steel, and, when such he met, the bloodless, but exciting, strife was worth one's while to turn aside and see.

Taking high ground, doing everything with emphasis and zeal, it was inevitable that the Bishop should pay largely that literary blackmail, which is wont to be levied from all

prominent public men. Nothing less was to be expected or desired, than that, as a public teacher and the foremost man of a party, he should have subjected to critical diagnosis, such implicates of his theology as might appear to his censors at variance with 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' But the limits of fair criticism are exceeded, in exact proportion to the indulgence in personality and abuse. These 'carnal' weapons, in the absence of better, and when better may not be far to seek, are too frequently resorted to, by those, especially, who write *sub rosa*, and whose business it is to weave the woof into the warp of the ecclesiastical newspaper.

Bishop Wilberforce, particularly in his earlier public life,—for, like all men of sterling worth, he lived down much prejudice,—got his full share of scurrilous treatment. Too well skilled in logical combat to remain any man's debtor, when the glove was openly thrown down, and the lists were fairly entered, there appears to have been rather more than the average proportion of masked battle carried on against him,

—an ambushed warfare, in which there was little brilliant, and nothing brave. From editorial arm-chairs many a fierce and furious diatribe was launched. Concealed archers shot at, and hated, him, but could not cast him down ; for the Bishop—like his native oak, ‘ which storms but root the firmer ’—lived and throve through it all. The anonymous philippics were taken by the discriminating for what they were worth, with the perception that their worth was small.

The great German Reformer adhered to the ‘ *Hoc est Corpus Meum*, ’ in spite of all modifying reasoning, and, in the fervour of his literal belief, chalked the saying on the table-cloth. Bishop Wilberforce’s apprehensions of the true grace of the Eucharist and of Baptism were ‘ High ; ’ but not necessarily Romish or Romanizing. The Sacraments which Christ ordained in His Church, are, in their nature, mysterious ; and more or less of controversy as to their precise scope and intention, has always hovered about them. If, with multitudes of the most pious, loyal, and eminent members of his Church, in past days and in present, Bishop Wilberforce

set forth great sacramental truths according to a conception which appeared to those who took him to task, to be pregnant with great sacerdotal errors, no one would complain that his adversaries should seek to expose the weakness of his position, and corroborate with incisive rhetoric the logic of their argument. But, not content with legitimate methods, they repelled sympathy from what was quite possibly, and speaking generally, a contention by no means destitute of its own proper strength, by introducing the humiliating expedients and feints of controversy—the ungenerous interpretation, the suggestion of motives biassed by policy, the insinuation of a wanton antagonism to known truth.

We might each feel pleased, in proportion to the firmness of our convictions, and the distinctive importance we attach to them, that those convictions should extensively prevail; but, to look for an absolute unanimity of opinion,—to condemn all who follow not with us,—were to set at naught the teachings of all time and of all experience.

The variety which obtains in the material

world, is no less prevalent in the mental and the spiritual. Every department of nature is in a strict sense obedient to Law. But it enters into the conditions of natural law, that dissimilarity of development and of manifestation should exist,—that there should appear a wondrous and beneficent combination of unity with variety. No two grains of sand, placed side by side beneath the microscopic lens, are found precisely alike. No two faces, in each curve and lineament, can be exact counterparts the one of the other.

When we investigate mental phenomena,—subject, themselves, to higher mental laws,—a corresponding diversity is realized. And, though we may believe that there is more of substantial unity amongst those who profess and call themselves Christians, than amongst the professors of any department of mundane philosophy, it were impossible so to express in human language the infinitely mysterious, and vastly diversified, subjects with which Inspiration deals, that no complexities should arise.

The differences which are rife amongst those

Christian believers who belong to evangelical communions,—differences often stated and insisted upon with a heat and exaggeration into which earnest feeling may of itself betray,—find their similitudes in those divergencies of opinion which are constantly proclaimed in politics, in medicine, in law,—in every branch of science, of ethics, and of learning. Save in matters of exact demonstration, or of such precise Revelation, as not properly to fall, in the case of those who have once satisfied themselves that the Bible makes good its claims, within the province of independent opinion, to expect all to arrive at the same conclusions, were as fatuous as to expect that curious optical instrument, the kaleidoscope, to present figures in various revolutions identical. That all should think alike is not to be expected: neither is it to be desired. If all divergence of opinion were proscribed, or rendered impossible, life would become a *hortus siccus*, a dull *deliquium*, animalism, stagnation, and intellectual death. Where, then, would be that stir, excitement, and improvement, which is now produced by the collision of mind with mind?

Meanwhile, the broad, elementary principles of Christian Faith and Practice are so defined and supported, that it must, surely, imply some lack of thoroughness of desire to do God's will, if a professed truth-seeker be not led to such a knowledge and acceptance of the Doctrine of Christ as is generally necessary to salvation ;—according to that saying of our Lord, 'He that believeth not is condemned already. . . . And this is the condemnation, that the Light ($\tau\omicron\ \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$) is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' But, on theological questions which, if not without their practical bearing, are allowed to be subsidiary, and in the domain of metaphysical speculation, the inquirer, though keen of intellect, and reasonably reliant on his conclusions, will often be forced to acknowledge that the effort to reach the point of certainty is attended with difficulty, and not always with success. Take into account mental constitution, academic training, spiritual receptivity, social surroundings, and a legion of discordant influences, and you will be constrained to admit

that identity of view must be, in matter of fact, an impossibility. If there be in exercise the right of private judgment, students of Scripture, and of ecclesiastical history, though they may not differ on any point essential to make their Christian belief a saving Faith, will differ on such points as those whereon the late Bishop may have differed from the majority amongst ourselves. If, indeed, it had been proven that he maintained a position which he *knew* to be false, there had been no room for his apology ; but the charge of insincerity appears to rest only on vague surmise.

The attempt to investigate how far the Bishop was right and how far wrong, in the views he conscientiously adopted, would open up a wide field for discussion. We leave that. Neither do we deny or ignore the fact that a man may hold very conscientiously a belief which may be very considerably erroneous ; and that he will be held responsible hereafter, according to the moral and intellectual conditions under which he lived, for what he believed, or failed to believe, as well as for what he did, or failed to

do,—for his creed as well as for his life. ‘Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,’ says St. Paul,—that is, let every man act from conscientious conviction :—supplying in the same chapter, the reason and the caution, ‘Each one of us shall give account of himself to God.’ The assurance should be intelligent and personal, inasmuch as the account rendered is to be intelligent and personal. Men will be held accountable for their religious views, and for the way in which they arrived at, and advocated, them. And, assuredly, so far as men are not dominated by animal passions, immersed in rayless ignorance, Gallios of a too fashionable indifferentism, or passive recipients of the undefinable *ex cathedrâ* utterances of creaturely infallibility ; so far as they are beings of mental habitudes, of conscience, and of judgment, they will form opinions on religious and moral, as on other, questions ; and their opinions, however formed, will be more or less, in the ratio of their importance and intensity, the germinal principles, the determining forces, of overt acts ; and no Christian will, we imagine, challenge his respon-

sibility for these. Nay, so cognizant and assertive of individual responsibility is to be the inquisition, that no man for whom the light of Reason shone, will escape by alleging that he formed *no* definite opinion, conviction, or belief, respecting the foundation truths of the Gospel, provided always, that full opportunity of embracing them was given. Thus, the servant who knew not and did not his Lord's will,—not wholly shielded by avoidable ignorance,—was to undergo chastisement, though the stripes were to be few. We cannot, therefore, doubt that retribution will follow upon sins of ignorance or of prejudice; and that the punishment or minishing of reward, will be differentiated according as the ignorance or prejudice touched more or less vital and practical matters, and as it arose from neglecting to seek accessible light, or from the brooding of a darkness which, from special circumscriptions, there may have been few rays to dissipate. Still, it is a good thing, and an attainable, in the estimation of God, as well as of man, to be trustworthy and honest; and this, we opine, may be claimed for him who is gone. Hypo-

crisy may, once and again, simulate a warmth it does not feel. Nay, there are professions whose traditions and sanctions are such that a man, upright and honourable in all the transactions of unofficial life, may feel it no disgrace to act a part. But we have no need to be told that the casuist essays a hopeless task who seeks, with his Bible still open, to justify the religious teacher who espouses and propagates, on the ground of a supposed ecclesiastical expediency, a view of Christianity which his own conscience condemns as erroneous.

We certainly will not undertake to say that everything Bishop Wilberforce taught was true ; that there are no aspects of religious truth which he beheld, if at all, with a certain obliquity of vision. Indeed, if there be any of you in the least acquainted with his teaching, they will have gathered already, that we are not concerned to set forth his theological system as a perfect compendium of gospel truth ; and that we make no pretensions to belong to his school. But his life was not such as to authorize a doubt that what he propounded as truth, was the ultimate

truth at which, with much painstaking, he had himself arrived ; and we do not know how any one could listen to his voice, without giving place to the conviction—‘This man is, at all events, *in earnest* ; he has the courage of his opinions ; he is telling me what he believes in his conscience to be God’s Truth, which it behoves me solemnly to know.’ After all the carping things which have been written and spoken, we remain unshaken in our belief that Samuel Wilberforce was, according to his light, a thoroughly whole-hearted and God-fearing man. Of course, it is open to people, in their overwhelming modesty, to lay the flattering unction to their souls that his light, if not an *ignis fatuus*, was yet, compared to theirs, as a farthing rush-light to the sun full-orbed ; and if they choose to put it in this way, we cannot go beyond the wish that, with the superior illumination, they may show themselves even equally, ‘children of the day,’ and serve with a like devotedness, ‘the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’ Beyond question, the religious world would become the centre of increased usefulness

and attraction, if leavened with a larger infusion of that Charity—‘the core of all the creeds’—which gives itself to more beneficent studies than the mote in a brother’s eye.

Taking the righteousness of the righteous from him, the *Record* expressed the gravest misgivings as to the future happiness of the great and good Dr. Arnold, because, forsooth, during life doubt sometimes darkened upon his mind ; and in death he failed to initialize aright the Shibboleth of a party !

‘ Oh ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun ! ’

exclaims Hood ; and so say we ; and, with David, ‘ Let us fall now into the Hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great : and let me not fall into the hand of man ! ’

The canon which Christ gave as the crucial test of piety, ‘ By their fruits ye shall know them,’ is a criterion than which they who cannot scrutinize the *penetralia mentis* of another, can have no better. By their fruits : not by chance appearances, to which the jaundiced eye gives

its colouring, and crass prejudice its distortions ; nor by a formula of words, uttered, perhaps, when the mind is off its balance, and the delicate apparatus of the intellect is out of gear, and the tossing and expiring man scarce knows what he says, or whereof he affirms. There is, indeed, a sweet consolation to be drawn by surviving friends, from the dying utterances of the righteous ; but, if the utterances come not to seal up the evidence of a good man's life, their absence should not obscure hope, nor introduce fear. Unsupported by previous consistency, it is easy to over-estimate the value of moribund testimony ; and its omission must be regarded as a flimsy pretext for summoning the shadows of a dark destiny around the bed on which such a man as Arnold dies.

But, to return : the same organ, at present, tells us that Bishop Wilberforce had 'a besetting sin.' That sin was '*the love of power.*' This is now the gravamen ; and we think the stress laid upon it shows that the action begins to fail.

Such an indictment may be colourably pre-

ferred against almost any individual who has attained to high position, and taken an active part in public affairs, religious or secular. The desire of power is a principle implanted by Him whose hands have made us, and not we ourselves ; and therefore, is not sinful in itself at all. The passion exists in every man, with varieties of original and acquired strength ; and when restrained by reason and religion—in neither of which we incline to think the Bishop was found deficient—from becoming a grasping ambition, its exercise, by promoting activity and enterprise, is of infinite, and, indeed, of indispensable, benefit to the race. In every great mind, in every progressive genius, there are, or should be—since much is required where much is given—aspirations after influence and usefulness, which rise on a more adventurous wing than those of everyday men. The eagle fixes his gaze on the sun, and soars nearer to the source—so to speak—of light, than his humbler congener, the sparrow.

The Bishop, we are well assured, was no stranger to lofty aims. By nature formed to be

a ruler, there were the strivings of a spirit of rare genius, versatility, resource, and attractiveness, to compass its destiny. Fond of combinations, eagerly desirating sympathy, cohesion, and joint action, the Bishop laboured to constrain people, and particularly his Clergy, to follow his lead ; but, that his moral constitution was over-balanced with the last infirmity of noble minds, is a conclusion which does not seem to follow from the premisses which his life supplies. There was no reason why Samuel Wilberforce should much affect the '*Nolo episcopari*;' or, when the mitre glorified his temples, shrink from magnifying an office on which he reflected honour, while it conferred official dignity upon him. In administrative talent he was remarkably conspicuous. The diocese of Oxford was proverbially the best-administered diocese in England, while, for a quarter of a century, Samuel Wilberforce presided over its destinies ; and we cannot, with any show of justice or of patriotism, quarrel with him for loving power, within the limits of his capacity to wield it for good, and to employ it in promoting the

efficiency of his Church, and, by consequence, the truest interests of his country. Shall we not, rather, say we are glad that he thus legitimately and rightly loved it, and rejoice that he was successful in the wooing?

With regard to that other charge, of *Bigotry*, often preferred against Bishop Wilberforce, you know there is a sense of the word in which a man must be a bigot, if he have sought Truth, as some men seek for gold, and is convinced that the Spirit has fulfilled His office, and has rewarded his patient strivings with clear apprehensions of religious truth. If his belief, as the net result of manifold vicarious and personal agonies, be worth much to him,—if it bring him comfort, and inspire confidence, and whisper hope,—he will scarcely look upon it as a private monopoly, a deposit for his own mere personal benefit,—a treasure evermore to be gloated over selfishly, and hoarded in secret. If he have the joy of full conviction, he will not rest content while men give in their adhesion to systems which he regards as the expressions of a warped

and defective Christianity; or, while they go up and down in sad eclipse of faith, revolving Pilate's question, though it may well be without his flippancy—'What is Truth?' The man who, not satisfied to take on trust a belief received by tradition from his fathers, has inquired for himself, and arrived at a harmonious belief, dwells in the Beulah of the soul, where he summers in the warmth and gladness of the full assurance of faith; and he is fleet of foot and strong of hand, to rescue the brother who may be weak in the faith, alike from the Slough of Despond, and from Doubting Castle, while heartening him for the brave breasting of the Hill Difficulty, and the wary walking amidst the perils of the Enchanted Ground. Nay, he will look upon him, even when lost to all the joys that fill the believing soul, as a being who has engaged the interest of God, as one for whom the Cross was reared, for whom the marvels of Redemption were wrought; and therefore as one whom, while he strives to convince, he will respect and greatly love. He will not repel by frowns, where he might

win by smiles ; nor be lavish of anathemas, where it becomes him, the rather, to be lavish of tears. His brother is out in the cold ; and he will be eager to bring him in, and to set him beside the fire that warms his own hearthstone, and lights up the ingle-nook of his home. His brother is famishing in the land of plenty ; and he will not speak mockingly sweet things which cannot profit—‘ Depart in peace, be warmed and filled ! ’—while he ministers not to his need. He will share with him the bread which came down from Heaven, that he may lay hold on the true staff of life, and never go hungry and unsatisfied again. In this spirit he will seek to persuade men to walk in the more excellent way it is his belief he has found ; and, if he be a man of warm and generous pulses, loving his brother’s soul as he loves his own, he will be the more earnest in the work of divorcing men from Error, and of wedding them to Truth. Such is the bigotry we would explain and justify ; such we believe to have been the bigotry of Samuel Wilberforce,—the bigotry inspired by deep convictions and earnestness of purpose.

But, if the imputation imply that the *odium theologicum*, or the exclusivisms of party, froze the genial current of his soul, and barred him out from a loving copartnery in the enterprises to promote which practical philanthropy bids men meet on common ground, we think the charge involves a huge mistake, and does this man a grievous wrong.

Passing over more striking, but less familiar, evidence, we venture to record an episode which, simple as it was, left upon the minds of those who witnessed it the impression that the Bishop's friendships were not altogether dependent on identities of view. Indeed, catholicity of spirit may well have been a patrimony in the family of him who ran the blockade of that hoary Superstition which battered and manacled the slave, and which heaped on the dusky brotherhood wrongs more bitter than death. Unfettered warmth of feeling and of sympathy might be expected to abide as a heritage, with the son of him who preached up a hallowed crusade against that inhuman Cruelty which kidnapped the negro beneath the palms of his native land, which

bore him away from his loved ones, and sold him in bondage, ignoring the grand design of the God and Father of all, who 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'

A Deputation was sent by the University of Oxford, to enlist the co-operation of the sister University, in organizing a Mission to Central Africa,—a Mission which shortly afterwards went forth under good Bishop Mackenzie, who was present on the occasion to which we refer, and who was destined to pay with life the forfeiture of zeal. Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford, sat quietly arranging letters—written to him from some Elim of the African waste, by his friend, David Livingstone—selections from which lent an added charm to one of the most remarkable speeches that ever thrilled an assembly convened within the Senate House at Cambridge. Well, you may remember that John Graham, whilom the excellent and eloquent Bishop of Chester, was an Evangelical of the Evangelicals. Yet we saw Bishop Wilberforce rush with sudden impulse across the platform,

seize the Low Church Prelate's hands, and shake them with such southern energy—an energy heartily reciprocated on the other side,—that the stern features of Mr. Gladstone relaxed into a smile, and the University youths could not forbear to cheer: so true to fact is the ironical saying,

‘One touch of nature makes the whole world kin!’

The High Churchman thus gave fraternal greeting to the Low: how warm would be the greeting the Low Churchman would give to the High, as he hailed his advent into that world of light, where the divisions which separate Christians on earth, are unknown; where the perplexities of time perplex no longer; and where the chief mystery left unexhausted and unexplained, is the infinite Love of God to man!

One of Bishop Wilberforce's greatest charms was the charm of manner. He wore his honours with an easy grace, and was one of the most polite of men. His *savoir-vivre* was such as to furnish his *soi-disant* judges—who could not

believe in any piety not Puritan, nor in any godliness not grim,—with the semblance of a basis for doubting his sincerity. The malcontents were, however, comparatively few, and evermore, as the Bishop's life asserted itself,—as years ripened his usefulness, and God testified of his gifts,—their ranks were thinned. An austere censor might give ear to wide-mouthed Rumour, put on a frown, and brand the Bishop a 'Romanist at heart,'—a 'Jesuit in disguise;' but let him go to a meeting addressed by Wilberforce, and the prejudice which asks, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' would melt away, even as the last vestiges of snow subside beneath the thermal influences of a spring sun. Content to take the man as he stood, the critic disarmed, could not then find in his heart to wish him other than he was. Softening down from the cynicism of the sanctum, he would apply to the life of Bishop Wilberforce, the noble critical maxim which Horace applies to verse.

The Bishop could not only disarm private

prejudice, when it would grant him a hearing ; he was equal to the task of laying its spirit, when it had seized upon the great body of a public assemblage. Here he reigned supreme. By his skill, eloquence, and fearless presence, he proved his power, on occasions which became historical, to subjugate an audience that was in its perhaps ultra-Protestant sentiment, violently opposed to him ; so that he was sure to conclude amidst ringing cheers, and in a 'blaze of triumph,' the speech into which he launched himself under a general and disconcerting fussillade of groans and hisses.

In fact, Samuel Wilberforce, a marvel in the pulpit, grew into a magician on the platform, where he could bring into play his lighter gifts. There was in him a matchless combination of those shining qualities, which, for good or for evil, give the born orator a well-nigh illimitable empire over the popular heart ; quickness of apprehension, readiness of expression, the faculty for seizing on the most trivial incident, and turning it on the spot, into an illustration, a lesson, or an argument ; a vast store of infor-

mation, so retained and arranged that the required facts and data started instantly forth at the call ;—each weapon in the moral and intellectual armoury kept bright and burnished for immediate use. Endowed with tact, with common sense, and yet with poetry and enthusiasm, and having at his command that finest of musical instruments, a very pleasant, sympathetic voice, which he modulated with infinite skill, and made the flexible vehicle of banter, humour, pathos, and passion, may we not say that there was no man—at any rate, in this northern clime, whose temperature is said to be unfavourable to impassioned oratory,—more mighty in the spells which fascinate or bewilder ? Perhaps he reached the acme of his power, when addressing a mass-meeting of working men. At such times, ‘the house’ would literally ‘rise at him ;’ and the ‘sons of toil’ would have hugged the speaker in their brawny arms, for the bravery of his bearing, the manifest sincerity of his utterances, the nervous stir and traction of his words. A sayer of ‘good things,’—things which ever gained a point

when he said them, and lost a point when any one else retailed them,—speaking, for the most part, with epigram and easy force: like the householder in the gospel, ‘bringing forth out of his treasure, things new and old:’ teeming with anecdote, coruscating with wit,—one moment, exhibiting a frank playfulness of humour; the next, a stern and scathing irony: passing ‘from grave to gay, from lively to severe;’—now, luxuriating in the fields of fancy; now, piercing some rampant heresy or social wrong, with his most keen and polished sarcasm; and, anon, carried away himself, and carrying away his audience, on the strong pinions of a vigorous rhetoric;—and giving emphasis to all he said, by attitude, and tone, and gesture, and a quick play of expression,—he took the vast throng of people by storm, and homed himself, from that day forth, unassailably in their hearts.

The Bishop of Oxford—afterwards of Winchester—was *facile princeps* in a wide range of things. He was emphatically, a many-sided,

clever, man. Brilliant as a preacher, he was yet more brilliant as a wit. Great as a conversationalist, a naturalist, a controversialist, a Parliamentary debater, a contributor to reviews, a propounder of cunning riddles,—he was no less great as ‘a teacher of babes.’ Nothing seemed to come amiss to his comprehensive and versatile genius; and the one quality which shaped all the rest into an attractive symmetry, and made him mighty in that far-reaching, ubiquitous influence which few men have rivalled, was the strange and absorbing *earnestness* of the man. Let him be found exhorting the young to live up to Baptismal privilege and Confirmation vow,—addressing an assemblage of rustics,—charming the ears of ‘listening senates,’—denouncing, from the Episcopal Bench, some daring raid on the Church,—advising Convocation, or lighting up missionary or philanthropic enterprise with a halo of chivalric romance,—there was the lambent glow, the electric touch, of an intense enthusiasm, that warmed all hearts, and enlisted all sympathies.

His *industry* was as surprising as his earnestness. We learn that, in his later years, four hours would often suffice him for sleep. When the most persistent toilers had retired to rest, his pen travelled swiftly still. In the early morning, while they were yet in dreamland, the pile of letters was rising beneath his busy hand. His professional experience was known to be so vast,—his ability and willingness to make it serviceable to his brethren, so thorough, that applications for his opinion and advice rained in upon him,—not only from his own diocese,—not only from every diocese in England,—but from colonial dependencies, and distant missionary settlements. Method in the apportionment, and a wise economy in the use, of time, together with an extraordinary celerity in mental operations, was the simple magic by which he compassed all he did. Each day appears to have been mapped out—so far as distinctness of programme in such a life was possible,—beforehand, engagement succeeding engagement as wave follows wave. Relaxation was found in turning from the severer to the less severe toil,

from the masterly review to the fairy tale for the child. While being conveyed by express along the gleaming line, the notes for eloquent discourse, to be delivered at the journey's end, were often written. That buoyancy and elasticity of mind which enabled him, without obtrusive effort, to meet the multiform and incessant claims of an important diocese, and to speak, time after time, from pulpit and platform, in most of the great centres of population throughout the length and breadth of the land, was simply astonishing. His faculty for doing things well and quickly, so that, while constantly at work, he seemed constantly at leisure, and was to be met with, oftener than any other prelate, at civic banquet and social gathering, made him, when well advanced in years, the wonder and the envy of younger and stronger men.

Remark has been made to the effect that the late Bishop is not the author of any of those English classics, whose perennial excellence is such that they laugh at Time, and are destined to

be as the running river, which broadens and deepens in its course towards the sea. And it is, no doubt, to be expected that a time will come, when people shall no longer be led by their partialities and needs, to make the genius of Samuel Wilberforce tributary to their mental or spiritual refreshment. All we wish to observe, on this point, is, that his contributions, sparkling or profound, to the current literature of his day, were well received at first, and have not yet lost their power to charm.

His series of eight Oxford Visitation Charges are wonderful examples of argumentative and rhetorical power ; and contain, in addition to matters purely diocesan, perhaps the most able representation extant, of controversies affecting the Church, during a very interesting period.

‘ Addresses to Candidates for Ordination,’—rich in experienced counsel, affectionate sympathy, and forceful appeal,—may have an errand and a mission for the men by whose hands, under God, the destinies of the English Church must be largely shaped.

‘ Heroes of Hebrew History’ is a brilliant

specimen of magazine writing, exemplifying the Bishop's usual felicity of diction, pathetic imagery, vivid characterization, and shrewd psychological skill.

'Agathos, and other Sunday Stories,'—now in its thirty-fifth edition; and 'The Rocky Island, and other Similitudes'—a work conceived in the same vein, and which has reached a sixteenth edition,—comprise many gracefully written allegoric narratives, designed for children of average intelligence. The true spirit of genius pervades these books: *vraisemblance* is marvellously sustained; and it is with absorbing interest that the young become acquainted, by means of the Bishop's realizing power, with the haps and hazards which befall those who set out on pilgrimage. Now, let any one make an attempt in this description of literary effort; and he may be surprised to find how exceedingly difficult a field he has undertaken to cultivate. The persecuted preacher, passing through the wilderness of this world, lay down in a cell of his prison 'home,' above the sluggish waters of the Ouse, and, in

the third quarter of the seventeenth century, dreamed his immortal Dream. In mystic somnambulism, he lighted on a mine which, proving for once a true El Dorado, yielded up lavishly to him its treasures, in largess of which it can hardly be said to have been prodigal to later explorers. The Bedfordshire tinker had the divining rod, which would seem to have been buried with him in his grave; for, while he has had a host of imitators, he has had no rival. We freely own that Wilberforce is no rival. Yet the Bishop, however put to shame by the Puritan *trouvaille*, has plenty of genuine ore glistening in his mining cradle.

We should, perhaps, append a note of warning:—‘Agathos’ and the companion volume, are, in some portions, redolent of high baptismal theory; and are, on this account, in some families books proscribed.

It was impossible, in the conditions of his existence, that Bishop Wilberforce as a writer, should equal Bishop Wilberforce as a speaker; and he led too active and social a life to indite a vast array of books. There may be writers

now living, who will fill an ampler space in the thoughts of men half a century hence, than they do now. The influence the late Bishop exerted, however powerful, was, in the main, personal, not posthumous. It was 'his own generation' that he chiefly 'served.' 'Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,' were given off by him with a prodigality like to that with which the sun gives off his rays, and, in further similitude to the solar beams, their effect was to ripen a proximate reaping. Yet, in distributing and maturing the cereals of the immediate season, provision is made for future ingatherings; so that the seed of which, during the many years of his spiritual husbandry, Samuel Wilberforce was the sower, or which he helped to bring to perfection, may wave in the white glory of successive harvests, on fields beyond his own horizon, and bear fruit unto life eternal, in hearts that shall beat at an era in the world's history far removed from his own. If he were not prolific as a writer, we cannot doubt that he gave the afflatus to some who have made, or who will make, their mark on

the high places of sacred literature, and on whose minds, while yet plastic, he stamped his image and superscription ; and, to imbue with noble aspirations, to rouse to beneficent exercise latent energies, was to serve, not only his own generation, but every succeeding one.

Of the Bishop's Parliamentary career, this is not the place to speak. In politics, as in theology, he was consistent throughout. On the Bishops' Bench in the House of Lords, he was the exponent, as he had been in the Union Debating Society at Oxford, of a discriminating Liberalism. The first great Parliamentary speech he made was in general support of the Religious Opinions Relief Bill, which had for its object the repeal of statutes which had been a source of weakness to the Church,—though she had been no party to their enactment,—had embittered controversy, and made the iron of oppression enter into the Nonconformist's soul. Next came his speech advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws. He often sacrificed personal interest at Court and else-

where, by his unflinching support of measures which were disapproved, and *vice versâ*.

The Bishop's long, arduous, and persistent struggle for the revival of Convocation, and the restoration of its rights and privileges, is well known. He used his extensive acquaintance with influential statesmen, and all his political sagacity, until he won back much of its rightful position : when thus re-established, he became the guiding spirit in its counsels.

While Bishop of Oxford, he ordained 1200 deacons, and 1060 priests ; and upon each of these were brought to bear his wonderful influence and personality. He so identified himself with the anticipations, perplexities, and toils of these young brethren, as to send them forth from the conversations, the addresses, the genial hospitality of Cuddesdon, with the consciousness of a loving and powerful sympathy which was a palladium in itself.

In the churches of his diocese, in the three

years which preceded his translation to the larger diocese of Winchester, he preached 226 times: the number of persons confirmed by him in those years, was 20,028. His Ordinations and Confirmations were overwhelmingly solemn, and intensely interesting to all who could appreciate their significance. His addresses at Confirmations—delivered without the aid of manuscript,—were astonishingly fresh and varied. His Lent Missions—in which, as in other things, he first set the example,—were widely useful, and permeated the diocese with revived Christian feeling.

The Institutions which owed to him their inception, or which, founded by others, derived from him a status unknown to them before, were numerous and important.

First of all, he founded a Society for building, or restoring, churches and parsonages; and when he left the diocese of Oxford, the number of churches erected, or entirely rebuilt, by this Society, was 121; while 250 had been enlarged, improved, or rescued from dilapidation. The

amount voted for this purpose, exceeded one million sterling; besides four-tenths of that sum expended on parsonage houses. In 1848 he drew attention to the desirability of providing a Training College for Parochial Schoolmasters. In 1853 such a College was completed, and in full working order. In 1851 he determined to undertake the erection of a College for the training of Clergy. In 1854 Cuddesdon College was formally opened. In 1857 he established the Spiritual Help Society, for aiding those beneficed clergy who might be overworked and poor, in the payment of their curates' stipends. In 1860 he started a Society for augmenting the incomes of small livings. And, while these labours were in progress, the diocesan contributions to the Church's Missionary work abroad, went on increasing in more than fair proportion to the increment of population. Amongst the schools other than parochial, which owed to him their origin, we may mention the Middle-school for farmers' and tradesmen's children, at Cowley.

Of course, there was a vast expenditure of toil, and thought, and speaking, connected with the launching and support of institutions whose names might be given in a brief page; but, passing by all this, we can only array, as we have gathered, the more salient facts. And we say of these institutions, that they will live after him who is gone, as imperishable monuments to his memory,—as his noblest constructive apology,—so long as there shall be moral wastes to be reclaimed, and struggling pastors to be assisted, and potential teachers to be instructed, and young plants to be gathered into the nurseries of the Church, and trained for immortality. These are substantial benefits conferred by the departed Prelate upon his Church and nation. These will *abide*. His offences, real or supposititious, which have been dwelt upon with such unction, and magnified with such unscrupulousness, are as the small dust of the balance: the vituperation that has been lavished upon him is now ready to vanish away.

We may conclude an exiguous sketch, with

a reference to the uphill, pioneer work which Bishop Wilberforce did, especially in the earlier years of his Oxford episcopate, when he arose most prevalent in protest against the exclusion of all manifestations of taste in beautifying and adorning the House of God, which too often stood in reproachful desolation, while men dwelt in their ceiled houses. Damp, cobwebbed walls, and listless services ; the style of pew, in which unwealthy folk sat in doleful penance, and paid for the session ; and crimson-curtained dormitories, wherein their better-conditioned neighbours whiled away the hour of worship ; the general adhibition of ' God's-acre,' as a memento of the sluggard's garden, overrun with weeds and tangle ;—but random selections these, from the long list of abuses against which he laid lance in rest, and went boldly forth to war ; and which—after much resistance from a conservatism worthy a nobler cause—his contagious enthusiasm, and persistent energy, persuaded the reluctant Churchmanship of the day to remedy, or to abandon. The modest ritual of our Church is now observed—with exceptions

in excess and defect, which only prove the rule, —throughout this fair realm of England, in a manner ‘decent and unproved.’ The old, invidious pew-system is, for the most part, abolished. The congregational response claims a hearing, and trespasses sonorous on the ancient ‘dull duet between parson and clerk.’ We have music that is no counterfeit, and voices trained to sing the songs of Zion, so as not only to educate and please the ear, but to refine and touch the heart. For something of all this, we owe thanks to the brave Bishop, of whom it may be safely affirmed that he did more than any other man of his generation, to popularize the ministrations of the Church he loved.

If there be some inclined to take a view in certain respects less bright than that which, in good faith, according to our very moderate ability to remark upon a life singularly open to general inspection, we have given, we trust there may be none able altogether to reverse our judgment. We have reason to believe that those who were in positions the most favourable

for arriving at a sober estimate, would agree with us that the deceased Prelate was a man, not only of great genius, but of sterling principle; not only a surpassing orator, but what is infinitely nobler,—a devoted follower of his Lord.

On the whole, looking at the great things this Bishop did, and the great things he ordained and equipped others to accomplish, the *Non omnis moriar*, of the Latin bard, if engraven on the episcopal tomb, and interpreted of elevating influences that shall touch posterity, would scarcely be of the number—not small—of mendacious epitaphs one sees; and, as an outsider, who watched this man only from the distant places of the heritage, one can but ask pardon of any who may have been within the wide circle of the Bishop's social or official life, for the poverty of this attempt to vindicate in its application to him, the testimony borne to the sweet Singer of Israel,—the testimony than which the man who has fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, may

desire no better to be breathed over his ashes,
—*'In his own age, he served the Will of God.'*

It was a fitting and graceful tribute to the excellence and worth of such a man, when with rude rocking he 'fell asleep,' that the Government should desire his sorrowing friends, accompanied by the heartfelt sympathies of the nation, to lay him gloriously to rest within the walls of Westminster Abbey, where he had so often preached and prayed; and where, amid the throng of England's most famous sons, his sire 'awaits the adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body.' And, indeed, it were a noble thing to have such sepulture;—to lie side by side with the wise, the brave, the good, of many generations, in the heart of a fane not more splendid in architecture than hallowed in association; and to have sweeping over one, evermore, the 'alternate wail and psalm' of an earthly minstrelsy. Yet were there associations dearer to the Bishop than these; and there was a domestic tie closer than the filial. The partner of his wedded life reposed beneath the sod at Laving-

ton. There, thirty years before, he had wept the tears of bereavement; and such was the strength and tenacity of that early love, that he had charged his kinsmen to lay his bones beside the bones of its object, that they might together rest in peace. His wishes were respected: the splendid obsequies were declined. In the sylvan grave, beneath no other roof or dome than that which the Almighty Architect hath built, the long-parted husband and wife await the summons that shall come. In that grave all that is mortal of the Bishop lies: in that grave lay ye to rest all harsh remembrance of what ye may have looked upon as blunders in policy, flaws in administration, or misapprehensions in the wide sphere of theological belief. 'To err is human.' Let the sinless and the unerring, if such there be, first fling the stone. The Bishop is gone from the midst of his people! In him we have lost no mean portion of the national stock of such things as are acceptable to God, and approved of men. There is struck off from the muster-roll of living men, a name that was a household word, a patriotic

charm. We look to the point where he disappears from the scene, as mariners on the trackless deep, to the point in the sea-line, where the planet of day sheds a parting iridescence on the wide waste of waters.

Alas, those lineaments over which the generous tides of feeling were wont to ebb and flow, are now motionless as marble! Those eyes, that erst beamed with pastoral affection, or flashed with 'consecrated angers,' are all lustreless now! That countenance, so mobile and expressive in life, wears only the fixed smile of the warrior, to whom the fatal messenger came in a lull of the strife!

' His soul to Him who gave it rose ;
God led it to its long repose,
Its glorious rest !
And, though the warrior's sun has set,
Its light shall linger round us yet,
Bright, radiant, blest ! '

Those lips, from which the perfection of practised oratory—stormful denunciation and sweet appeal—was wont to thunder and to flow, have now, impressed upon their portals, the seal of

death ! Nevermore, by that most captivating voice, shall the backslider be wiled to renewal of the blest experiences of his 'first love ;' or the despairing be soothed and cheered with words of tenderness and hope ; or the prodigal be lured from far and desolate sojourn, from gaunt famine and gnawing guilt, to the warm claspings of paternal arms, and the domestic sanctities of childhood's home ! Never again, shall the bad man, who may yet take warning, hear, in the leonine tones of that great Bishop, prophetic echo of the judicial thunders that shall roll on a startled Creation the fearful heraldry of Wrath ! Nevermore, shall the good man,—vexed with sin and tired with strife,—longing to be where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest,' make high resolve to grasp the firmer the almost discarded sword, and yet again to play the man, on some stray hearing of his commemorations of those who, in days of yore, 'out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens' !

Gone, from the busy stage of our national life,

is that lithe and graceful actor, that ever-moving figure, erewhile so instinct with all that makes the grandeur and the beauty of the man in whom rich gifts of intellect are sanctified by richer gifts of grace! We say not that the light of Israel is quenched,—the glory all departed. There are men left to shine as lights in the world,—men mighty in faith, strong in hope, earnest in service, brilliant in genius; but the remarkable combination of opposite and diverse gifts which met in him whose loss we deplore, we can hardly hope to see gathered into a single personality again. No: ‘Take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again!’ Therefore lies he not down in his narrow bed, without the requiem of a most tender regret, which wells forth from countless hearts as the burden and the expression of a conscious loss. Let no unseemly prejudice now distort the view,—no weird forms of doubt and despair flit about his grave!

‘The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.’

Let the ill-omened saying be here reversed!

His 'failings,' which ever 'leaned to virtue's side,' may be written on the sand, but the next contemptuously curling wave shall leave no sign of ungracious inscription. His deeds of charity, his words of wisdom,—his pleadings for the benighted, the oppressed, the miserable, the forsaken,—his manful wrestlings against the Wrong, his brave espousals of the Right, on fields where Truth and Righteousness prevail, and the emissaries of Evil are smitten, and the battles of Heaven are won upon the earth,—Sirs, are not these memories of sweetness and of power, in whose presence hypercriticism should be mute, and party prejudice should die,—memories which might worthily be woven by some great poet into an elegy, and be carven by the sculptor on the monumental stone? Nay, cherished in the heart of the nation, fostered as a dear tradition in the bosom of the nation's Church, the memory shall *there* dwell abidingly, as an element of refreshment to the toilers of an after day,—grateful as the frankincense and myrrh, which the star-guided Magi from the orient gates of Morn, laid by the cradle of the Most

Holy Child; or as the moral fragrance that shall evermore exhale from that 'very precious ointment,' which Mary poured on the Feet of her Lord!

'His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.'

Brethren, there are many sheaves to be carried away by the harvestman, as he passes over the wealthy field of such a life as this of SAMUEL WILBERFORCE. Our reaping does it scant justice;—we can but put the sickle into your hand, and bid you do your own. In briefest, slenderest outline, we set this man's life before you as a pattern, and would nerve you for the noble emulation. Oh, say not, faithless heart, that the Bishop was too high-placed to be an exemplar meet for thee! His natural powers, his intellectual greatness, you may not emulate;—his moral worth, his holy endeavour, you may. The poet's song condemns unworthy thoughts, and bids thee rise to the higher level,—'I can do all

things through Christ who strengtheneth
me'—

'Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.'

God grant that our 'footprints' may be the footprints of His saints, who follow, beyond all track of lower guides, 'the blessed steps of Christ's most holy life'! This is the course that conducts all its wayfarers to happiness. Pursuing it, you may not take rank amongst the 'great men,'—as the world estimates greatness,—whom genius makes strong 'to climb the steep where Fame's proud Temple shines afar,' and whose lot it is to 'read their history in a nation's eyes.' Not unto you, in this sense, may 'the path of duty' be 'the way to glory.' But you will be of the *good* men, who 'allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way.' If you live without circumstance, and die poor, you will not live without purpose, nor die without the outbreak of unfeigned sorrow, or trace of regretting tears. In the day when you cease from this

world's fellowships, those who were wont, with reason or without, to criticize and carp at details, will cast a retrospective glance through the vista of your years ;—will see it crowded with witness that, in your own age, you ministered to the Will of God ;—and will endorse and apply the inspired benediction,—‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.’

Let the words with which we now close, be those of thanksgiving for the departed righteous ; and of supplication for ourselves, who are left in conflict here below. They are the concluding words of the Prayer for the Church Militant, which have so often gone upward from the depths of the heart that is still :—

‘We bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear ; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy Heavenly Kingdom : grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.’

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SERMON II.

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SERMON II.

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE.

FAITH: SERVICE: RECOMPENSE.

ACTS XIII. 36, 37.

'For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.'



SOME of the reasons we have for concluding in regard of Bishop Wilberforce, that, 'in his own generation he served the will of God,' having been laid before you, let us devote two discourses mainly to what we marked out as the other division of our subject; pursuing,

II. *Such reflections as may seem adapted to constrain us, in respect of Christian service, to follow the Bishop's example.*

One of the most obvious and useful of the lessons we may learn from the life of the great Englishman who has been taken from amongst his people is, the lesson of unstinted consecration of existence to the service of God. Of Samuel Wilberforce we believe that he gave himself to religion *early*, and, though, mixing with the world as he did, he had his moments of forgetfulness no doubt, spent the whole of life under its pervading influence.

Now, it is on Eternity that thought must fasten, if we would rightly estimate the wisdom displayed by that departed saint, of whom it may be said, 'In his own age he served the will of God.' If it be the teaching of the Bible, that the actions of a good man's life are the germs from which glory is to grow; that 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for

ever and ever : ' if it be indeed true, that 'He which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully,'—then must the glory be inconceivably great, the harvest exceedingly plentiful, when the supreme aim and effort of a long life has been to turn men to righteousness, and to sow imperishable seed. And is not this the sufficient reason why long life, notwithstanding its multiplicity of trial, is spoken of as a special blessing ? and is not the Bishop's life herein nobly instructive ? He was no late labourer, taking hold of the plough, or casting grain into the furrow, with unaccustomed hand, as the sun goes down, and the shadows gather. When the soft rose-light of morn bathed the landscape, he went forth to sow : when the sun was climbing hotly to the zenith, he was busy in the field : when the sober tints of evening heralded the night, he withheld not his hand. The result was that the Law of God, in its Christian observance, proved to be 'the perfect Law of liberty,'—the service of God, 'perfect freedom.' This man, like all who have made the experiment, found that, to be engaged in the

pursuit of objects which Conscience approves, and the Gospel sanctions, is to be engaged in a pursuit every step in which is a step also in happiness. 'Godliness hath promise of the life that now is;' but its largest promise is 'of that which is to come.' It is a consideration that should wonderfully stimulate and sustain exertion, that there is to be such minute correspondence between what the Christian believer does here, and what he shall enjoy hereafter, that so slight a ministration as the giving, in the Name of Christ, to a little one athirst, a cup of cold water, shall in no wise lose its reward. And the reflection that every action has its impact on a future state, intensifying its joy, or acuminating its grief, should have influence with men on trial for Eternity. Is there not a delusion lurking in the secret chambers of many hearts, that Religion is all cross-bearing,—much to give up, and little to compensate,—and that years spent in the service of sin are all so much clear gain, if Hell be finally escaped? Oh, that the unconverted would consider the years that are past!

Experience, objective and subjective, would give its testimony—the longer and more diversified the experience, the more emphatic the testimony—that, while he yet walks the earth, it is well with the righteous ; and that there is no alchemy by which the ‘pleasures of sin’ can be transmuted into happiness.

Now, brethren, it is a fact indisputable, that they who serve not God’s will, but spend life in ‘fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,’ are wont to place great reliance upon ultimate repentance and immunity from spiritual loss. It may, then, influence to holy purpose, some who have hitherto hesitated to take part with the righteous in serving the will of God, if we can convince those who are buoying themselves up with the hope that, though they live wickedly, they may yet die in the odour of sanctity, how fallacious the hope is likely to prove.

We gather from the text, that ‘David served in his own generation, the will of God,’—the expression implying a general continuity, a broad

expansiveness of service, not service narrowed down to a point. We have tried to make it clear that Bishop Wilberforce followed an illustrious precursor in this path. His sudden demise shows that if, in reference to the great business of personal religion, he had all along yielded to a temporizing policy, the result would have been fatal to his hopes. A policy of hesitation may prove forthwith fatal to the hopes of any who have chosen it here. Yet there are amongst us those who hold on to that policy, in the expectation that it will not only increase present happiness, but scarcely diminish future. And we are thoroughly aware that reasoning, unless pressed upon the conscience by an Agency higher than any human, cannot profit those whose course is determined rather by the propensions of a perverted nature, than by any process of ratiocination that actually satisfies the mind. We know that the course of the rebellious runs counter to the inductions of an enlightened Reason, as well as against the directings of Revelation. Yet the ministers of Christ have to acknowledge and to lament

that there are in every congregation, those who, knowingly, 'do always resist the Truth;' who 'hear Christ's words, to do them not;' and of whom, if they take not a new departure, it may finally be said, 'The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' But this in no degree absolves us from the 'necessity' that 'is laid upon us' to 'preach the Gospel,'—to strive with these men, by its threatenings of wrath, and by its conditional promises of deliverance. The ambassador for Christ has now ringing in his ears the accents which impressed upon Ezekiel in the long-ago, the obligation to declare the whole counsel of God, though the declaration may be now, as it was then, to a people most rebellious. 'Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.' 'If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.' In any case, whether men accept or reject its message, God's Word returns not unto Him void. If sinners repel it as a Word of conversion, at least they

cannot stifle its voice as a Word of witness. As a witness, it is to be preached unto all nations, as preliminary to the Second Advent of the Son of Man: as a witness, it will furnish evidence at the last Day, to the whole intelligent creation, that God is justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. And there will be such a vindication of the Divine Honour—and it is to this that the publication of the Gospel has respect, as an Object eclipsing in importance all human advantage—when God arises to take vengeance on those who hearing, obey not, the Gospel, and who are therefore inexcusable, that there will be glory unto the Lord, in the accomplishment of whatsoever has been threatened, as well as in the fulfilment of whatsoever has been promised. ‘We are unto God,’ says the Apostle, ‘a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; in the one we are a savour of life unto life, and in the other a savour of death unto death.’

But vengeance is God’s ‘strange work.’ He is said to ‘come out of His place,’ to inflict it. He ‘delighteth in mercy.’ He ‘hath no

pleasure in the death of the wicked.' He feels immeasurably more honoured in the salvation of those who take refuge in His Son, than in the destruction of those who avail not themselves of His interposition. Then let those who have not so availed themselves, give earnest heed to the things that are spoken with a view of relaxing their hold on a broken-reed confidence, which may fail them when they most need support. May the demonstration of the Spirit be given to our contention, that they take too much for granted, who decline to serve in their own generation, the will of God ; and who yet hope to share the righteous man's reward, by a summary settlement of their long account with their Maker, in the last moments of mortal existence !

And we beseech the unrenewed, as those who would not barter what is worth more than gold, for a philosophism, not to think it enough to enter a caveat that, albeit they put off repentance for the present, they intend not to suspend it till the last moments of earthly life. For observe : the man who has delayed often, and who delays

now, is acquiring a fatal facility for hardening his heart against every influence and every appeal. And further, no man who defers repentance at all, has any right to assume—unless, indeed, he can assume that he shall be amongst those who survive the next hour—that he defers it not to the remotest boundary of a probationary scene.

Does the Bible, then, instruct us that Salvation is so much a matter of course, that we may reckon to grasp it in the moments of our last sickness, when there may be fever in the blood, and delirium in the brain? Is it in one pitched battle,—fought with nerveless hand that is letting go its hold on life,—that principalities and powers are to be wrestled with and thrown, and glorious allotments through Christ secured? Nay, methinks I have read of the series of engagements and the continued warfare, the prayerful pilgrimage, the patient continuance in well-doing, the long-run course, and *then*, the consolations of the fair Land of Rest which lies beyond the Jordan that divides the wilderness through which we move, from the Canaan that

we love ! I have read of the Christian believer, by the successive workings of 'tribulation, patience, and experience,' having wrought in him the 'hope' which 'maketh not ashamed.' Or, if the comparison be to the processes which go on in the laboratory of Nature, still, all is gradual, nothing spasmodic or eccentric,—'First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.'

Again : in steeling, for the present, their hearts against the Truth, sinners forget that they are taking the steps which may place them where Jerusalem was found, when her 'time of visitation' expired,—beyond the possibility of repentance, and therefore beyond the possibility of forgiveness. 'The beloved City' impressively preaches, from the midst of stern desolations, to the men of all climes, that, where God has greatly loved, and His Love has been spurned, He may greatly punish ; and that, when all legitimate means have been long and vainly tried, He may presently seal up the contumacious for destruction. Let the impenitent beware of living on the sup-

position that the day of grace must of necessity be co-extensive with the day of life. There are not wanting intimations in Scripture that, ere the pulse has ceased to beat, the Spirit may have ceased to strive; and that, ere the blood has ceased to circulate, converting influences may have been withdrawn. We fully recognize the possibility of death-bed repentance,—under certain conditions; but they, at least, who have ministered by the death-beds of the ungodly, are aware that those conditions, even where there is no over-clouding of the mental faculties, involve much that can rarely be found in men who have spent life in impenitence, under the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and in full view of the various exhibitions of what has been done for them by the Lord their Redeemer.

The physician may hope against hope, and administer the medicament, under a possibility, however shadowy, that it may be salutary. We may, we must, bring the offer that has been heretofore rejected, to the man on whose brow are the dews, and on whose eye is the film, of

death, as well as to the man in health ; and with the more urgency, as we know absolutely that the time is short. We must tell him, as life sinks apace, that there is balm in Gilead, and a Physician there ; that ' the Lord's Hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither His Ear heavy, that it cannot hear ; ' that if he will look to Jesus in faith, he shall be saved from condemnation, and have final entrance into that City into which shall enter nothing that defileth. But, alas, how often do we find that the man, though not straitened in God, is straitened in himself ! He has smothered conviction, broken the spring of that responsiveness of feeling with which he was originally endowed. The emotions which, in vernal years, answer so readily to the touch of the Spirit, have become, so to speak, crystallized ; and the man is now the subject of spiritual anæsthesia. Therefore, though the means are provided, and are adequate to the extremity of human need, he cannot avail himself of them. It is not that he has committed any crime, or any series of crimes, so monstrous as to be beyond the power of Christ to pardon ;

for so to state the case, were to limit the virtue of the Atonement, by saying that there can be in the compass of iniquity, a sin greater than any for which Christ made expiation. It can never be that the Atonement is insufficient: it can only be that the Atonement is rejected. It is that the sinner has so barred the door against Christ, that he cannot *now* open the portal which Christ will never force. Jesus passes by; but the crowd of evil habits intervenes, and lays so strong a bias upon the will, that the infatuated man turns away, without even a desire to touch His robe. The man has been so unaccustomed to care for the soul, to study its interests and seek its salvation, that, even now, when, if he repent not, it must perish, he looks upon its fate with stolid indifference, with abject terror, or with the apathy of despair. There is, ordinarily, no realization of the fearfulness of the spiritual situation. Whatever of thought, whatever of feeling, the dying man yet retains, is centred in the body, is engrossed by its ailments, and perhaps hovers round the hope of its restoration; and the state of the soul awakens no emotion,

and enlists no anxiety. Indeed, the setting aside of all the laws by which God has covenanted to work, would be no less conspicuous, if the body, that has been suddenly brought to the gates of the grave, or rasped down by some fatal malady, were to rise up and walk, than if the soul were to turn unto the Lord and live. Who, then, will delay giving heed to the things which belong to his peace, when he may be stretched upon a dying bed at any moment, and when the probability against his becoming then the subject of a mighty spiritual reformation, is almost 'as an infinity to a unit'? 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!' This fact,—verified in human experience,—that a man may bring himself, while within sound of the Gospel, into such a state of hardness that repentance becomes morally impossible, is amongst the most awful of the considerations with which the preacher has to ply his hearers.

Are there any here, who have so hermetically sealed up all the avenues of approach, that for them Christ feels that, with all His love, and with all His power, He can do absolutely

nothing ; concerning whom He can only say, as He said of the blinded Pharisees of old, ' Let them alone ' ? Does this congregation comprise a member, whose ' conscience is seared—cauterized—with a hot iron ; ' whom ' it is impossible to renew to repentance ; ' and of whom the Saviour of sinners may exclaim, as erst in a very passion of weeping He exclaimed, when gazing from the slopes of Olivet upon the City of His desire, ' If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes ? ' Oh, we hope not ! for if there be, we must feel that on him our words can make no saving impression : unattended,—as they would be, in the hypothetical case,—by the breath of the Spirit, they must needs ' pass by him as the idle wind ; ' and ' the weapons of our warfare ' can no longer be ' mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, ' wherein the powers of darkness are impregnably intrenched. We would fain take your appearance in this House of Prayer, as evidence that amongst you there breathes no man thus finally forsaken, thus

hopelessly dead while he lives. But if, by joining in the worship of Christian assemblies, you prove that you still attach value to the means of grace, and therefore are not completely hardened, and therefore not inaccessible to appeals which can only be hopefully made on the presumption that there has been no utter extinction of moral sensibility,—let the procrastinator be warned by the possibility that he may be rapidly drifting towards spiritual abandonment, when he must be dealt with as one who has blasphemed and quenched the Spirit, and when, in reference to the man who has foreclosed his probation, and judged himself unworthy of everlasting life, ‘the Law must take its course.’ The invitation God gives you through the preaching of the Cross in which we glory, is one that demands instant and grateful acceptance; and if this be not accorded, the offer may, from various causes, never be renewed. ‘*To-day*, if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts!’ If you do now harden them, who can predict the coming of a day in the uncertain future, when softening influences—and you cannot

repent without them—shall be vouchsafed? The continued strivings of the Spirit are continued manifestations of a patience not to be matched in the dealings of man with man; but you have no guarantee that the Divine Agent will go on, with no other limit than your natural life, kindling a fervour which you forthwith allow to grow cold, and renewing impressions which are renewed but to be effaced. And, if you choose to consider the contingency of the Spirit taking His everlasting flight, so rare, or so remote, as scarcely to come within the range of what is practical and pressing,—there is still the fact, the condition,—and it is a very solemn one!—which characterizes and attends from stage to stage, the life of disobedience, of rendering His strivings less effectual; for He will not bring the force to bear which would interfere with free agency and moral accountability. By a law which is variously illustrated, and always operative, influences which lead not to action, become insensibly weaker by repetition. Therefore, we tell the unrenewed amongst you that, putting out of view the uncertainty of life,

there is no time to be lost ! We believe you may yet cry for help, and that the cry will be heard ; that you may yet, with the power which, if earnestly sought, will be given you from on high, burst asunder the stringent withes of Habit, and successfully cope with the Philistines who are upon you ; that, notwithstanding past refusals, and though you had no warrant for presuming that each several negation would not be taken as final, God still commissions His ambassador to offer 'conditions of peace ;'—to warn you that you no longer rush, infatuate, 'upon the thick bosses of His bucklers ;'—no longer to contend with God—'Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker !'—but to accept His friendship, and reciprocate His Love. But, if you resolve to 'continue in sin that grace may abound,'—to suspend on the gossamer thread of a death-bed repentance, the immense issues of Eternity, and to secure that the soul shall live, when the body must forthwith die, we remind you that there must be two consenting parties to a bargain—we use the word advisedly—and that the vast probability, the

almost certainty, is that, if you, of set purpose, determine to give to the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the rich wine of existence, and the worthless lees to God, you would make an insulting and ignominious covenant, to which He will affix no seal. God our Maker calls us to repentance and faith, as the initial steps in a new life of obedience, and progressive sanctification ; and as for the hope that He will enable us to take them as the final steps in a course of overt or covert rebellion,—what is it but the ‘expectation’ which, ‘when a wicked man dieth, shall perish ; and the hope of unjust men,’ that ‘perisheth’ ?

It behoves all men to be careful what they look upon as proofs of ‘godly sorrow.’ ‘The sorrow of the world worketh death ;’ and may pass muster with men, but certainly not with the Lord God, who ‘searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins,’ for that which ‘worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.’ ‘The way of transgressors is hard.’ A time comes when there is full acceptance of the fact. Remorse gnaws the heart. The man

writhes under the tyranny of inveterate sin ; but such is its 'deceitfulness' that, while he feels himself oppressed, he does not of necessity hate the abominable thing, as the really contrite man does hate it, in and for itself. On the contrary, perhaps he could be content still to roll it as a sweet morsel under his tongue ; but the time arrives when nausea sets in. The 'worse wine' is served out to him ; and the bent of his mind is such that he feels constrained to quaff, though the bitterness of death be in the draught. Then, the song is hushed, the false friend forsakes, and the shadow of death falls upon the path ; and now, if the hapless soul on the eve of departure, teach the lips to pour forth expressions of anguish, they are eagerly seized upon, by those who, from piety or human love, are anxious that he who goes hence should 'part in peace,' as indicative of repentance unto life.

Thus, the death of the wicked, instead of being noted as a warning, is registered as an encouragement,—making repentance a thing of dying phrase and sentiment ; so that men come

away from the scene of dissolution with the notion mightily reinforced, that, in repentance *per se*, there is some kind of satisfaction for sin, which may be paid down at any selected moment, in full discharge of a debt.

Yet is there no idea more opposed to the first principles of the Christian Religion than this. Repentance and faith are not magic charms fraught with power to condone the past. They are simply the means by which we lay hold on the salvation that is freely offered us in Christ, and by which it becomes available. They are the conditions which, being complied with, pardon is obtained, and the soul quickened to 'newness of life,'—that is, to a new life;—and the transgressor 'often reproved,' and 'hardening his neck,' has Scriptural ground to dread the arrival of the time when the Spirit shall have ceased to strive, and when it will be practically impossible to comply with conditions which are yet indispensable to the entering into Life.

When we expostulate with the impenitent in this strain, they will, perhaps, point us to the history of the Penitent Thief, and seek to

derive from that history a kind of encouragement which it was never intended or adapted to convey. It is forgotten that, of the *two* who were crucified with Jesus, while one believed with the heart, and made confession with the mouth, the other died reviling ; and that the thief who supplies the only instance of moribund repentance recorded in Scripture, died, probably, in the prime of life, and certainly, in thorough possession of his faculties, by a lingering death, in full view of the sufferings of the Redeemer, a witness of His patience, a hearer of His dying words. He also *knew* himself to be marked off for death. There was no room for any delusion as to a possible recovery. You are to add to this, that there is no evidence—quite the reverse—of his having become the subject of that peculiar induration which results from the repeated presentation of Revealed Truth, its intellectual acceptance, its practical rejection.

On the whole, we are persuaded there are many circumstances which, duly weighed, would make it hard for the impenitent in our midst, to regard the case of this particular malefactor

as supplying a typical example of dying repentance, parallel to what may be their own. The pardon of the expiring thief shows that the greatest transgressors may be, nay, certainly will be, forgiven, though pressing on the line which separates the visible world from the invisible, *if*, when so awfully situated, they are enabled to repent and believe the Gospel. But is it certain,—and this is a matter in respect of which no man ought to rest content with anything less than such certainty as he *may* have,—nay, is it likely, if you reject the grace of repentance now, you will have it vouchsafed unto you then? In addressing you, we address not the Heathen, but the Christian,—those who have been ‘baptized into Christ,’ who are covenanted members of His Church, and on whom the motives and influences of Christianity are brought unceasingly to bear. And we are not to pronounce that repentance, at an advanced stage of the eleventh hour, is, in every such instance, absolutely impossible; but we believe it to be so utterly improbable, that if, in a worldly enterprise of great moment, to success

in which a direct and honourable path were open, an individual were content to stake all on such a hap-hazard eventuality, you would hold him for a foolish man who selects the sand for a foundation, when it is quite competent to him to build upon the rock.

Ah ! my impenitent brethren, the Evil One may soothe, cajole, and flatter with the hope of final contrition and forgiveness, those who give him the flower of their age, and the long service of their influence, and intellect, and life, and who refuse to serve in their generation the will of God ; but Christ admonished the scornful and impenitent of His day, of a sin the perpetrator of which 'hath never forgiveness;' and we know not what the unpardonable sin can be, if it be not the sin of persistent Unbelief, where there has been everything to convince and to persuade. We know not what 'the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost' can be, if it be not the finishing of the sin upon which men enter, when they set themselves to repress every motion of the Spirit, every remonstrance of Conscience, every aspiration

after the Heavenly and the Eternal. We bid you, then, take heed, lest, while you go on year after year, fostering ignoble schemes for reveling in sin, or mocking the soul's hunger with the desert-apples of worldliness and formality, and yet escaping punishment, you overreach yourselves, rather than God,—lest the veil of judicial blindness be woven, and the heart become proof against all attack, and the soul pine away of moral atrophy.

Now, we are quite prepared for the suggestion that the compassions of the All-merciful are infinite ;—and far be it from those to whom He 'hath given the ministry of reconciliation,' to 'limit the Holy One of Israel'! God is, indeed, a Being of an infinite tenderness ; but it is to the last degree dangerous and futile to forget,—as the mere theophilanthropist would have men forget,—that God's tenderness is never exhibited inconsistently with His firmness and Truth. 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' 'If we believe not, yet God abideth faithful : He cannot deny Himself.' 'Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but His words shall

not pass away.' He yearned over us in our lost and ruined estate ; but Justice demanded satisfaction, and urged claims which, being based on eternal fitness, could not be set aside. Without shedding of blood, there could be no remission. To beings who had hearkened to the suggestions of the Tempter, and broken loose from allegiance to God, compassion could only be extended through One who, mysteriously uniting in His Person, the nature of the offending creature, and that of the offended Creator, should fulfil every requirement of the violated Law,—work out for those who had parted with holiness, a glorious Righteousness of Faith,—offer Himself as a spotless Substitute for sinning and suffering Humanity ; and, having undergone the penalty attached to transgression, rise without seeing corruption ; and ever after plead, on behalf of those who, being partakers of flesh and blood, should confide in Him as their Surety, the merits of a vicarious Sacrifice. Such an One we behold in *Jesus*, and in Him alone. 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be

saved.' He was that Immaculate Victim, who was 'brought as a lamb to the slaughter,' who was 'wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,' upon whom was 'the chastisement of our peace,' and 'with whose stripes we are healed;'—who 'took away sins by the sacrifice of Himself;' and through whose mighty achievement God can 'be Just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' And if you see in this marvellous Plan, a Love which passeth knowledge, you see, also, in the unimaginable endurances of the Sin-bearer, irresistible evidence that God is 'a Just God and terrible,'—One who was determined to magnify and make honourable the Law which He Himself had given,—and which He would not have given, had it not been absolutely just and good, the necessary Rescript of His Perfections,—ere He could exclaim, 'Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other:'—'Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.'

Oh! let us be thankful evermore, that, although no scheme of Redemption could be devised by Infinite Wisdom, which did not hinge upon the Death of the Incarnate Son,—otherwise, He had not ‘poured out His Soul unto death,’ and been ‘numbered with the transgressors,’—yet the Father ‘spared Him not, but freely delivered Him up for us all.’ By this arrangement, into whose mysteries ‘the Angels desire to look,’ God hath set before you ‘an open door, and no man can shut it.’ See that you close it not against yourselves! Come now to Jesus, who is ‘exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ Alienated from Him, you are in a danger in comparison of which there were safety for the man who slumbers where swift flames leap, and crackling timbers fall,—safety for him who wanders in the murky night, on the escarpment of the crag that slopes steeply to the sea, or who is tossed among the shallows that are lashed into foam, at its storm-swept base. From devouring fire, from hungry flood, there

might be escape which men would count miraculous; but, if you 'tread under foot the Son of God, . . . and do despite unto the Spirit of grace,' where is your hope of escape from the Anger of your God? And 'God is angry with the wicked, every day.' They dwell in a fools' paradise, like the voluptuary in the parable, who said unto his soul,— 'Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!' and whose dreams were broken in upon by the abrupt and startling address,— 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!'

'Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer :
Next day, the fatal precedent will plead ;
Thus on, till Wisdom is pushed out of life !
Procrastination is the thief of time ;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled ;
And, to the mercies of a moment, leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene !'

But stay! there is more than this to be said.
We will seek to stir the impenitent amongst
you by another, and a higher, motive, and then

leave them utterly without excuse, if they delay the immediate and practical taking up of the Cross. The Gospel makes its appeal not alone to the dread of Retribution, but to the hope of future Recompense. We know that this motive is not the highest. We should, no doubt, do right because it is right ; shun wrong because it is wrong ; without the too eager balancing of consequences, on the one side or on the other. Yet is it inevitable, constituted as we are, that one element at least, in the satisfaction which the religious feel in serving the will of God, should be the knowledge that God has stipulated to reward the service, not, indeed, because it is meritorious,—seeing that what is given back in service must first have been received in assistance,—but because He is Gracious. It is far enough from true, that a devout man fears God simply because he may have made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, in the past ; or because He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly, in the present and the future. Many a time since the ‘utilitarian’ assertions

of Satan were rebutted by the Patriarch of Uz, holding fast his integrity amidst violent catastrophes and intensifying sorrows, have God's servants proved that adversity did but mellow unselfish virtues, and deepen genuine trust. But, 'he that cometh to God must believe that . . . He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;' and God appeals to man by a variety of motives calculated to enlist powerfully those principles which are found in human nature, whether renewed or not. There is the instinct of self-preservation, or the desire to escape what our nature shrinks from as injurious; and there is the hope of that 'sure reward,' which is to be given 'to him that soweth righteousness.'

Let us, then, suppose the anticipation of death-bed repentance realized in actual fact. Let God work the miracle, and call suddenly into action the fine play of awakened sensibility. Let the seared conscience regain the lost tenderness. Let the man whose heart has grown callous in wickedness,—frosted o'er with worldliness and pride,—find the Gospel, which he has heard a

thousand times, and a thousand times rejected, coming to him,—as it probably came to the thief on his cross, from the lips of the Sufferer by his side,—as it comes to the savage, from the lips of the missionary,—as it comes to the child, from the lips of the mother,—with all the wonder and fascination of a new and sublime announcement, so that he who, through a long life, has resisted every appointed agent, shall be made to yield to sudden and mysterious assault. Let the dim eye fix its gaze intelligently and savingly on the Mediator, and the dying sinner be snatched away to Paradise. What then? He is saved, and that is much,—more than thought can measure!—but will it make *no difference* to him that his earthly existence was barren of good and fruitful of evil? Will his destiny be as bright, his recompense as mighty, as that of a Paul, a Luther, a Wesley, or a Wilberforce,—nay, of the least conspicuous disciple, who, in the privacies of ordinary life, hath served his God, in the daily ‘work of faith, and labour of love’? Not so! The man whom the touching Story of the Cross has failed to move to repentance and

amendment of life, in childhood, youth, and manhood, and who only yields to its sweet sorcery, when the last sands tremble in the hour-glass, will then be conscious that, in failing to recognize the immortal possibilities which have all along been involved in his own responsible being, his life has been without the inspiration which alone can make human existence happy, useful, and glorious ; and he will feel, too, that, as a natural consequence, the capacity for drinking in the pure joys of an immaterial state, must be less educated and developed, the vantage-ground from which he starts, in the endless race of Eternity, less elevated, the final entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom, less abundant, than if he had remembered his Creator in the days of his youth, and given his life, from its earliest intellectual dawn, to the laying up treasures in Heaven, and the seeking happiness in God !

See to it, then, ye who are disposed to withhold from God the 'reasonable service' He demands, lest, when the time of your departure is at hand, it be embittered by a throng of remorseful memories, and harassed with fears of diminished

recompense, and a less lustrous crown ! Learn, from the registered annals of the righteous, what beauty there is in holiness ; what pleasantness and peace in the paths of Wisdom ; how easy the yoke of Christ ; how light the burden He binds on those whom He makes one with Himself ! ‘ Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; ’ cultivating that Religion which exalts what is lowly, and dignifies what is common, which sanctifies sorrow, and glorifies toil ; striving to benefit and bless all who come within the play of your influence ; you will be ‘ the salt of the earth,’ diffusing through society an antiseptic savour ; and you will be able to say with St. Paul, ‘ To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’ When that last abiding ‘ gain ’ is gotten, those who bear you to your resting-place, may say, ‘ We saw him, indeed, torn by sharp suffering, falling a prey to the destroyer of humankind. Nevermore shall he relieve distress, bring joy to the heart of sorrow, or chase the doubt-cloud from the perplexed one’s soul ; no more shall he reprove vice, or animate to righteousness ; yet may we

write upon the sepulchre that shall contain his dust, an inscription that breathes with Hope, and is prophetic of Immortality. And if we be challenged to the proof that he was united by a living membership to Christ, the Destroyer of Death, oh ! we give it in the words that were spoken of the man "of whom,"—in lineal descent,—“as concerning the flesh, Christ came :”—“*In his own generation, he served the Will of God.*”

Now, we would be vigilant in this place, especially on occasions when we give due meed of praise to human excellence, against adding strength to the feeling—too widely cherished—that a man may become virtually his own saviour. If we are to be guided by Pharisaism, by Romanism, by any of the Protean systems born of human pride, we may be justified, in whole or in part, by self-merit ; but, if we yield ourselves to higher than earthly teaching, we must be content to learn that our ‘goodness’ extends not to God ; that, when we ‘have done all’—supposing such achievement possible—we must confess ourselves ‘unprofitable servants ;’ that, while we

cannot be saved unless in us good works have flourished, justification will be by Faith in the merits of Him who alone can stand on the ground of personal merit before God. 'Show me thy faith without thy works,' says St. James, 'and I will show thee my faith by my works.' Faith and works correlate; and works are of faith both the fruit and the evidence. A man cannot have true faith in the Mediator, and derive therefrom no impetus in the direction of those 'works meet for repentance,' to which the Mediator summons. Let men exercise that Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which the Gospel requires; and the leal and loving Service,—of course with immense variations in its forms and degrees, arising from complex differences in physical, mental, and spiritual conditions,—will follow, in some sort as the effect follows upon the cause. But, let 'the cattle upon a thousand hills' be offered in mighty holocaust, or the 'rivers of oil' roll at the feet of Justice, their costly and abundant wave; let men make pilgrimage to distant shrines, or macerate their flesh with fasting and penance; or spend life, and health,

and fortune, in more enlightened modes of service, in the hope of earning pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and a heavenly portion ; and the truth will still remain to confound all refuges of lies,—will remain, not as a distinction of the schools, not as a philosophical refinement, but as a fundamental principle in Divine Revelation, that God values no gift, if the *heart* be not given,—that ‘ without faith, it is impossible to please Him,’—that ‘ the just shall live by faith,’ and that ‘ whatsoever is not of faith is sin.’

It is very observable that, whatever service David, and other righteous men, under that Covenant whose sign was Circumcision, were enabled to render to the will of God, is ascribed to Faith,—Faith, that is, in God, and in the Messiah who should be, but was not yet, manifested to the world. And as we deem it incumbent upon us, in view of the materialistic tendencies, and formalistic developments, of the age in which we live, to bind upon our hearers the obligation to give to Faith its proper place and sphere, we would offer

a few remarks upon the nature of Faith,—Faith in the Christ actually manifested, and as conditioned by that New Covenant whose sign is Baptism.

And herein, we need not take as the subject-matter for transcendental discussion, the gracious influence—if any, and of what description—which is vouchsafed to the infant disciple in his Baptism. On this vexed question, various theories, more or less satisfactory, have been urged, with more or less of plausibility and force. To deal with any of them controversially, is beside our present purpose. There is a general consensus of opinion that Baptism should be administered in infancy ; but there is no general agreement amongst members of the Church established in this realm, as to the limits within which Baptism may be regarded as a channel of Divine communication.

You may with Bishop Wilberforce occupy high ground, and believe that, in and through the Sacrament of Baptism, the Spirit chooses to accomplish what may appear under the circumstances, to human reason, to partake of the

nature of magic. You may argue that, as, by the imagery of common life, men influence the mind of the infant, whose apprehensive and reasoning powers are yet undeveloped, the Divine Agent may deal directly, by methods peculiar to Himself, with the soul of the infant, which cannot be reached in the same way as that of the adult. Remembering that God hath said, 'I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My Blessing upon thine offspring;' and that an inspired Apostle exhorting to Baptism, hath said, 'The Promise is to you, and to your little ones (τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν);' you may suppose that infants, when 'born of Water,' are, at the same time, 'born of the Spirit,' and that the 'outward and visible sign' is inseparable from that which it symbolizes,—the 'inward and spiritual grace;' and you may conclude, from various passages in which the sign and the thing signified seem made to synchronize, that the Holy Ghost mysteriously communicates Himself, without respect of persons, to all alike, when, in the phraseology of Scripture, they 'put on Christ' in Baptism.

If you adopt this theory, you will, of course, account for the unspiritual lives of multitudes of the baptized, by saying that they have more or less fallen from Covenant grace; so that, by resisting and grieving the Spirit, who has never ceased to strive with them as baptized members of Christ, they become gradually hardened, and at last, it may be, reprobate.

Or, you may explain the expressed confidence that the child is spiritually visited, on the hypothesis that the sponsors may be righteous men, whose fervent prayers on behalf of him whom they undertake to instruct, may be presumed to avail with God. You may interpret the strong assertions of Scripture, and of our own Baptismal Offices, as anticipative of grace still future and contingent. You may visit the nursery, the orphanage, the seminary; and as you observe the obedience, gentleness, and truthfulness of one baptized child, and the disobedience, violence, and mendacity of another, you may infer that the distinction is not altogether to be accounted for by any reference to differences in physical health,

educational training, or natural disposition ; nor yet, to the cherishing in the one case, and the opposing in the other, of spiritual assistance given equally to both ; but that the Spirit has vouchsafed that grace to the one child, which, in the exercise of His Sovereignty, He has denied, or granted less affluently, to the other.

Or, not to notice other modifications or alternatives of view, you may take Baptism to be the token of a Universal Church ; as the authoritative symbol, the public recognition, of a pre-existent Fact—a Fact which Baptism does not create, but to which it bears witness—that God is our Father, and that Christ is our Redeemer, whether we realize, accept, and act upon, to the saving of the soul, the Paternity and the Redemption or not.

But, whatever theory most commends itself to your prayerful judgment, as being most in harmony with the general teaching of Scripture, and of the Church of this country—and we venture to think each will be found, when interpreted according to any fair sense of the terms respectively used, to present precisely *the same*

difficulties, so that, if you find sayings hard to be received in the formularies, you will find they do but echo equally hard sayings in Scripture,—we suppose there are none of you who will not cheerfully admit that, when the disciple, who was grafted into the visible Church at a stage so early as to preclude all possibility of conscious faith, arrives at the period when he is free to avail himself to the full of privilege, or to hold such privilege in abeyance, he must have—he must prove by his life and conversation that he has—an intelligent, personal, influential Faith in the Son of God, if he is to be saved. You will allow, surely, that it will not be enough for him, if he be living in a state of actual alienation from God, to bolster himself up upon his Baptism, and to meet the argument for the necessity of repentance and conversion, or renewal, by saying, ‘I was regenerated in my Baptism, and therefore stand not in need of a great spiritual change;’ any more than it could countervail the moral and political slavery of the Jews, to meet the suggestion of spiritual emancipation with the assertion, ‘We be

Abraham's seed,'—which was as true as it was wide of the argument,—'and were never in bondage to any man,'—which was, even in its civil bearing, historically and immediately false. And therefore, since, without controverting any sacramental theory which is not absurd and impossible on the face of it, and fraught with spiritual peril to him who holds it, we may press upon such of you as are yet in rebellion against God, the necessity of personal surrender, we would engage you in a brief meditation on the nature of that Faith by which the surrender is made.

And, on the negative side of the question, we give a wide berth to those who teach that justifying faith is involved in a theoretical or professional assent to any set of dogmas, the adoption of correct, systematic notions, the admission of certain formulas, propositions, or creeds. Far be it from us to undervalue the formulated *symbola* of Christian belief; but, it is in reference to the man who boasts a merely speculative faith,—a faith of the head, which transforms not the nature, and regulates not

the life,—that St. James asks, ‘Can [his] faith save him?’ Verily, no! ‘For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works, is dead also.’ A belief in the truths connected with Christ’s Person and Mission may be long entertained in the absence of all true faith ; the facts of the Gospel History may commend themselves to the understanding, and win assent from the intellect, by the sheer force of cumulative, historical evidence ; so that you may have concurrently exhibited, the anomaly of a thoroughly orthodox creed, and a thoroughly heathenish life. And true faith may keep pace with the annunciation of the Truth, as in the case of the untutored savage, who receives into his heart the message delivered for the first time in his hearing, by some preacher of righteousness who has left fields already subdued by the arts of moral husbandry, to publish Christianity on virgin soil ;—receives it in a glade of the primeval forest, whose mighty boles are yet unsplintered by the woodman’s axe ; or on the banks of some river, whose waters have never been foamed

by steamship's paddle, nor subdued to the keel of war, nor sullied by contact with the polluting haunts of men,—that has given music to no song save its own, and whose legends, awaiting the interpreter, are chronicled only in the murmur of its own ceaseless wave. But saving faith, in its essence, is a reliance on Christ Himself, the giving ourselves up to Him, to be used as instruments, for doing and suffering His pleasure. 'The faith of salvation,' as an able writer observes, 'is the act of trust, by which one being, a sinner, commits himself to another Being, a Saviour, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed for ever.' Faith is the yielding up of ourselves, and the taking Christ in exchange ;—the renunciation of all supposed claims and merits of our own, and the entire dependence on the Righteousness of Christ, who is 'the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Faith is the casting of ourselves, as the unholy, the ruined, the perishing, upon His Work, His Propitiation, His Resurrection, His Intercession.

And trust in this Person, in this Nature, in the achievements of this Divine, sinless, and yet suffering, Man, exerts an influence upon the springs of feeling and of action, not altogether to be brought down, like the facts of a material philosophy, to the mental grasp of him who has it not. Faith, as required in us who hear the Gospel, we take to be a personal transaction between the soul and Christ, and this principle, in its practical operation, begets in us an affinity, a likeness,—assimilates us in mind, in will, in thought, ever more and more to the Mind, and Will, and Thought, of Him upon whom it is fixed. Faith is that wonder-working principle, which, when it exists only 'as a grain of mustard seed,' carries far beyond a nominal Christianity, and which, in its progressive power, makes labour light, and persecution a thing to glory in, and trial a blessing in disguise, and death a chariot of triumph, to bear away from all scenes of distress.

And, my brethren, if there be in our souls no principle, which, in the main, masters temptation, no victory over the world, no joy in the

Lord, no following after holiness, alas ! there is abundant evidence, without the keen analysis, or minute introspection,—evidence in a cold, factitious, surface Christianity,—that our services are but as the fretwork on a mausoleum, the decorations of a corpse ; and that, whatever we may boast of the status we acquired, and the blessing we obtained, when, by Christian parents and sponsors, we were solemnly dedicated unto God, our bosom is *not* the home of the Faith which vivifies, and justifies, and saves.

But if, on the other hand, all appointed proofs of the Spirit's work *do* exist, it were a simple waste of thought, a vain tormenting of ourselves, to be continually passing faith through the mental crucible, nervously testing whether it be real or false, strong or weak, little or much. What wonder if we be on more familiar terms with doubt than with confidence, when we concentrate our thoughts so much upon ourselves, and our own April moods, instead of 'looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith ;' in whom we are 'complete ;' and who is Immutable,—'the same yesterday,

and to-day, and for ever' ! We are to walk with God, to keep close to His side, in the companionship and friendship to which, through the Pacificator, He has raised us ; to see that our love to Him grows not lukewarm, and that the service He enables us to render, is no mere 'form of godliness,' without 'the power ;' and then we shall know that our faith is genuine, because authenticated and accredited by the fruits it bears.

You see, then, how simple a thing faith is, and yet how sublime. You see, I trust, in some measure, why faith is represented as the initial step in the higher Christian life, without which all else is naught. You see why the Gospel is called 'the Word of Faith,' and he who receives it, a 'Believer ;' while 'the Righteousness of God' is said to be 'by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.'

Have you this faith, brethren ? Then, 'the eyes of your understanding' have been 'enlightened,' and Christ, by the Spirit, has 'expounded' to you, as none other can, 'the

things concerning Himself,' and He now 'dwells in your hearts by faith.' It is possible you may not be able to settle 'the chronology of conversion;'—to say when—how early in childhood, or how late in manhood—the Spirit began to take of the things of Christ, and reveal them effectually to the soul. From your earliest years He may have carried on the work to which the life bears witness, silently, as the leaven permeates the meal; or He may have wrought in you repentance by the ministry of the Word, or by the calamities of life, or on the bed of languishing, or by the death of dearlings to whose life you clung; but, whatever the process, whatever the instrumentality, you are sublimely, happily, conscious that He has renewed you in the spirit of your mind; has imparted to you a strength, a courage, and a perseverance in the ways of God, not natural to fallen man; has drawn you into close, and is ever attracting you into closer, union with Christ.

Have you this faith? Then let those who demand the precedent, and question the au-

thority, come around you ; and, like the man whose day had been a long night, and upon whose darkened firmament there came at the anointing of Jesus, the flush of dawn, weaponed by the full assurance of faith, against all suggestions that the light in which you walk and are glad, is but the mirage of fancy, or some subtle type of ophthalmia, you will be ready to cut the Gordian knot of sophistry, with the blade Excalibur of a fearless and thankful confession,—‘One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see !’

Have you this faith ? Then, surely, men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. For, if you live up to the richness of privilege, there will be the even walk, the brightened intellect, the godly conversation ; the heart ‘baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire ;’ the ‘love’ which ‘many waters cannot quench ;’ the raying out in the life of all hallowed influences ; the soul restful with the sense of settled controversy and forgiven sin ; the ‘conscience void of offence ;’ and the ceaseless doxologies of the reconciled spirit, as it

cleaves its way upward, and rejoices in the nearer vision of the Man at the Right Hand ; and there will be a realizing appropriation of the noble words of St. Paul,—‘ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ ! ’

Oh ! have you this faith—the ‘ faith which worketh by love ’ ? Then, with Philip, you can say,—‘ We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph ; ’ and it will be your life’s crowning honour, your heart’s most cherished purpose, to bring others into His Presence, that they may see Him and believe !

Brethren, it was by the exercise of Faith in Him who alone can save the Brahmin, and who alone can save the pariah, that the late Bishop of Winchester was saved. If any man may march boldly up to the Throne on the Day of reckoning, and demand the diadem, because in Christ’s Name he has done many wonderful

works, Samuel Wilberforce is that man : yet, if, on this ground he were content to base his claim, he must hopelessly perish ; for God will grant the rewards of His Kingdom to no man but on the terms of the Gospel, and those terms exclude human merit, and are dependent on Faith in the great work of expiation. Brilliancy of mental gifts, splendid acquirements, an imperial fancy, fluency of utterance, social qualities, high position, all these,—and the half has not been told,—were found in him who has fallen from the pinnacle of his greatness. These were sufficient in themselves, to insure him a present reward, in the admiration and praise of men, but not a future, in the ‘Well done!’ of God :—

‘For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee.’

Unless faith prompted, leavened, and sanctified the service, it had been a ‘vain oblation,’ like unto the fair fruits and flowers with which Cain strewed his altar, and on which no attesting flame leaped down. ‘O Lord, all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee!’ ‘Where, then, is boasting?’ Surely,

‘it is excluded.’ If God give the talents, and the grace to use them, there can be no saving merit in their use, whatever of condemnation be involved in the hiding them in the earth. Trust in the frail and tangled network of human merit never yet conducted a soul to salvation; though, alas! to how many has it been ‘the net of the Flatterer,’—the mesh of ruin. Pardon the iteration of this truth,—the slayer of self-righteousness,—there is no character so perfect, that it can abide the sifting scrutiny that is to be applied at the Last Day, and be adjudged to Eternal Life on its own merits. There is an entailed, and also a contracted, leprosy upon every scion of the first transgressor, from which no Pharpar stream can cleanse, and to the purging away of which no waters but those which flow from the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, can prevail. We are, indeed, in evil case, if we fail to draw healing and life from the bruising and death of a Sin-bearing Christ. ‘Woe is me!’ cried the Prophet Isaiah, ‘for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the

midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts !' And such, with an unrelieved bitterness to which the Prophet was not abandoned, must be our cry, yours and mine, when the Son of Man comes in the cloud, in all the pomp of Heavenly Judicature, in the burning splendours of the last Assize, to sit in Judgment on the world, if He who was typified by the 'live coal,' touch us not, and speak not the words of purification !

Our best works, our worthiest actions, need lustration. Our faith itself, if efficacious, being the principle which the free grace of God, given in answer to prayer, calls into exercise, can have nothing of merit ; and, so far as it is vacillating and mixed with infirmity, is a thing to be pardoned. Many a man with fair intention, hath built on the foundation of a true, however imperfect, faith in Christ, 'wood, hay, stubble ;' and the character of the superstructure must depend, in some degree, upon the character of the foundation. The love of God in the heart may co-exist—as we know it does in

pious Romanists—with imperfections in the apprehensions of faith, and may reduce their consequences to the lowest terms. Yet is it to be expected that, if a man's faith be evangelically incorrect, he will suffer somehow. It may or may not be true of the late Bishop, that, in the exercise of his ministry, he built on the right foundation much that was of perishable material. 'The fire shall try his work, of what sort it is;' and all that the testing-flame shall prove destructible shall be consumed: the builder himself, to that extent 'suffering loss, . . . shall be saved; yet so as by fire.'

Brethren, we are all of us builders for Eternity! Let us build, not on the shifting sand of human merit, but on the Merits of our Redeemer; and, having laid the foundation on a Rock, let us take heed how we build thereupon. Holy Sacraments, ordinances, preaching,—it is at your peril you despise them,—it is at your peril you rest in them. Viewed as means to an end, they become channels through which the grace divine may flow in plenitude and in power. To mistake the channel for the source, the means

for the end, and to attach saving merit to a perfunctory use, was the offence of Scribes and Pharisees, against whom,—as finding their counterparts in ‘whited sepulchres,’ festering with inward corruption,—were hurled the denunciations of the Lord. There was much to please a tasteful æstheticism, and the pride that is always for building its tower, if, haply, it may reach unto heaven, in the gorgeous Ritual which was all in all to them. There were the material grandeurs of the Temple itself, one of the marvels of the age,—an edifice so stupendous and remarkable that, while their gaze was fixed upon the magnificent pile, the disciples seemed to have no ear for the discourse of Him who ‘spake as never man spake.’ And, inferior as Herod’s Temple was to the Temple of Solomon, in Divine symbolism and mystic possessions, the worshipper beheld therein decorousness of observance, comeliness of worship, the smoke of the sacrifice, the quivering upward of the incense, the rich robes of officiating priests, the gleam of inestimable gems, the flash of all that bright and burnished gold. He listened to the reading of

the Law and the Prophets, in that ancient Hebrew tongue, before whose rugged majesty and terse expressiveness all others 'pale their ineffectual fires;' and there was inspiration in the silvery music which 'rose and fell like a benediction' over all. And this was 'well and fair.' But Jesus had said of Him in whose honour the beautiful fane was professedly reared, and the rites were ostensibly performed,—'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' In the absence of this spiritual worship, the greatness of abused privilege became the measure of the greatness of condemnation, and the self-confident Pharisee, with his boast of bi-weekly fast, and scrupulous giving of tithes, went unjustified away. And if external sanctities, and rubrical precision, drove not away the guilt from the Jewish, neither can they from the Gentile, soul; for the acceptable service which the Father seeks, and owns, and honours, is

essentially the same now, as it was then ; so that the solemn statement of the Great Teacher should be taken to heart by the men of every generation,—‘ I say unto you, that, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.’

Here it is, brethren, that we touch the pivot of the great Controversy we carry on with Rome ; aye, and with those misguided men in our own Communion, who are doing the work of Rome. And the words of caution to which we devote the remainder of this discourse, may be words in season, when setting before you as an example, a departed ruler of our Church, who was suspected by some—unjustly, as we believe—to be favourable to the theological system of Rome.

The Church of this country, guided by Holy Scripture, sets forth ‘ One Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus ; ’ and holds fast to the position that ‘ we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; by Faith, and

not for our own works or deservings.' The Church of Rome parades a host of subordinate mediators, and instructs her members that they may do enough, and more than enough, to merit for themselves the salvation which St. Paul declares to be 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' And yet, though the Romish theology strikes at the root of Religion as taught by Christ and His Apostles, men would have us make large concessions to that theology, with a view of bringing round the Reunion of Christendom. 'That they all may be one,' was the intercessory prayer of Christ; and that prayer shall yet be more gloriously answered; for, 'in the Dispensation of the fulness of times,' He shall 'gather together in one all things in Christ,' when a pure Christianity shall universally prevail. But the oneness can only be real and abiding, so far as it is founded on the Truth, as the Truth is in Jesus, wherein resides that Divine energy which must prevail to the overthrow of all false systems. Such outward unity as may be maintained, or recovered, by a sacrifice of Truth, or a truce with Error, is a little

more damaging to Christianity than no general ecclesiastical unification at all.

It is not for us to cringe and sue for a union with *Rome*. Nay, rather, 'Come out of her, My people,' saith the Lord, 'that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' She made the chasm, by introducing heresies which are at issue with the Gospel of Peace; and it is for her to bridge over the mighty rift, by asking for the old paths, and by returning in penitence to the purer theology of an earlier day. There seems little hope of such return, now that she is alienating her own children, by requiring of them belief in Dogmas like those of the Immaculate Conception, and Papal Infallibility,—the latter of which has already become the parent of such alienations in States once obedient to Rome, that it may prove in the overruling Providence of God, the element which shall have been made an integral part of, that it may disintegrate, the most corrupt form which Christianity has to any extent assumed. Let us not listen to the siren voice which lures but to betray, and which would

beguile by cunningly woven sophistries to a fatal recreancy from the principles of the Reformation. Protestantism is not, as some men in our own Church are not ashamed to teach, a gospel of negation, which came in under the cowl of the monk Luther; but is a contention on behalf of (*pro testis*) principles which are at least as old as Christianity. Let us not countenance the opinion—ask the Romanist proper what *he* thinks of it—that there are few differences, and those unimportant, between the Reformed Church and the Unreformed; lest martyrs and confessors rise up in the Judgment to bear stern witness against men who let slip, by supineness, that national hold upon the Truth, which they secured by their labours, and cemented with their blood. Depend upon it, if we are not the better, in heart, and life, and creed, for the brave daring of the testimony they bore against dark and cruel superstitions, we expose ourselves to severer doom.

Not that it is necessary, while avoiding the Scylla of Romanism, to rush into the Charybdis of Puritanism. It is no more a valid reason for

rejecting a truth or an observance, that a corrupt Church embraces it, than for introducing an innovation, that it has the sanction of the Vatican. We accept the Old Testament as the Truth of God, though it comes to us through the hands of Jews, who encumbered it with 'the tradition of the elders,' whose authority we are disposed to hold cheap; who throw the bitterest scorn upon the New Testament, which we place on a level with the Old; and who rejected and crucified Jesus, whom we acknowledge as the Messiah. Let us try things by the Law and the Testimony, that Ithuriel spear, at whose touch it is in the nature of Error to shrink away abashed; and if the archives of early Christianity throw any light upon a practice to which we are accustomed or invited, let us not undervalue, when it does not contravene the teachings of Inspiration, the testimony of Christian antiquity. Our Reformers have left abundant evidence that they were not of those who break down the carved work with axes and hammers, and who decline to use, because Rome abuses.

But the menace to the Church of England

now is, not from the Puritan, but from the Roman and mediæval, side. Into how many churches consecrated to a Reformed worship, a so-called 'Catholic' ceremonial is being foisted, which is scarcely to be distinguished from that traditionally in use in the Roman Catholic chapel hard by!

Men tell us, indeed, that the time for protest is past,—that it only serves to stereotype quarrels,—that it is a pity people should be perpetually at war, who, with a few mutual concessions, made in the spirit of charity and liberality, might be at peace. But, to these soporific counsels there is reason frankly to demur. There are circumstances which make war obligatory, and peace criminal. There is the environing the young, the imaginative, the enthusiastic, with peculiar, and very real, perils; there is the strenuous, determined effort to barter away, piecemeal, the inheritance rescued by a Protestant ancestry from a predatory foe; and then, because love is the fulfilling of the Law in the Christian creed, there must be a serene stillness, a consenting

silence, or sweet pæans of 'Peace! Peace! when there is no peace!'

An extravagant ritual is becoming in some quarters the fashion. Popery, with whose doctrinal system extravagances of ritual are most in harmony, and to promote which they are the approved instrument, may become the fashion. The 'unsealed, entire, wide-open Bible,'—whose spirit so dwells in the free pulsation of our national life, and has made an island which is but a speck upon the seaman's chart, so universally great that, to say of a traveller in distant lands, He is an Englishman, is to say that which, when individual folly does not neutralize national repute, often operates as a charm to protect from injury and to insure respect,—may be closed; and the future of Great Britain may teach other lessons to the striving peoples, than those which are legible on the scroll of her illustrious Past. Italy has achieved deliverance from the nightmare that for centuries oppressed and paralyzed her quick energies. Spain, France, and Austria are in the throes of freedom. Is it meet that the nation whom God long ago emancipated from

the hard bondage of a priestly despotism, that she might become the pioneer of a healthier civilization, the herald of a purer Christianity, through the world, should forget at once her sufferings and her triumphs, and again bend her neck to the hateful yoke? Yet the enemy is at her gates;—may we not say, is here and there posted within them? One need be no lying prophet, no vain alarmist, no dealer in spiritual pyrotechnics,—one need only have ears to hear, and eyes to see,—to discern in the signs of the times, the signs of an intenser struggle for the assertion and conservation of our rights and privileges, as a Protestant people.

The drift in the direction of Romish doctrine, within the Established Church, set in at Oxford, some forty years ago, with the dissemination of the notorious and subtle 'Tracts for the Times.' To give to that doctrine,—now largely, daringly, and ostentatiously developed,—the fascination which lies in an appeal to the senses, the magic of an imposing symbolism, there has been the movement—accelerated of late—towards Romish

ritual and practice. Let this assimilating process be continued for a few decades ; let the spirit of Protestantism slumber, while the enemy, or the mistaken friend, sows these tares ; let this Romish virus infect the mass of society ; and not only may the Established Church forfeit that constitutional status which she has enjoyed so long, and which with so much of blessing and of safety to the community, she enjoys now ; but the land of the Reformers may know by recurrent experience, the untold evils, political, social, and religious, which ever have been, and ever must be, in all lands, inseparable from Romish ascendancy. God forbid ! ‘We hope better things’ for our country, ‘and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.’ The battle is not lost : the disease is not beyond cure : the nation is yet sound at heart. But, if there be danger, and that danger nigh, we shall not, by closing our eyes against all causes of alarm, avert the judicial visitation which hangs over those who fold the hands to sleep, when the warning cry has gone forth,— ‘Sentinels, alert !’ And, undoubtedly, there is

much to disquiet, in the Romeward tendencies of a revolutionary faction,—much to make the brave-hearted tremble for the balance of that Reformed part of Christ's Church established in this English realm.

The appearance of an exotic Ritualism will affect men variously. Some unstable ones, who are attracted by it, will be, in due course, transplanted to the soil in which the baneful plant is indigenous;—others, whom it fills with disgust, will go over to Nonconformity, leaving a Church which they look upon as no longer pure. Numbers, who are ready to catch at the infusion of a spurious currency, as an argument against belief in the existence of any true coinage, will learn to regard the Christian Religion as a 'fond superstition,' a 'cunningly devised fable,' a thing of wax-work and relics, of flower-pots and candelabra,—'vacant chaff, well meant for grain.' The movement bristles with dangers of an opposite kind. If the people be not won over to the Church of Rome, they may yet be driven from the Church of England; though there be no general perversion, there may be wide-spread

alienation. They who lapse not into Indifferentism or Infidelity, may be led to strike hands with Liberationists, who would have the nation mistake for a Divine voice the summons to loose off from the ancient moorings, and beneath a penumbra of uncertainty, crowd all sail on an ocean of convulsive change !

We do not, we hope, advocate intolerance, nor take sides with stiff religionists, who, in their self-complacent dogmatism, refuse to recognize the mystery which underlies all things, and who cavalierly pass judgment on other men's consciences without privilege of appeal, at the bar of their own. Any course of action, whether pursued by Governments, or Courts, or mobs, to which the name of Persecution suitably applies, is a blunder in policy, no less than a solecism in morals. Persecution generates sympathy,—sympathy, love—love, not only of erring brethren, to whom the principle is rightly extended ; but of the erroneous practice of which they are enamoured, and which we ought to detest, as its malfeasance it has been given us to perceive.

The Church of England will never wish to

bind down those who minister at her shrines, on the Procrustes' bed of a rigid uniformity ; for she needs not now to be taught that the human mind cannot be active to run in a groove, that ' the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns,' and that where there are no differences, there is no life. There are many questions of doubtful disputation, on which the voice of the Church is silent, or susceptible of variant interpretation, and on which her members must agree to differ. It is impossible that any Church should be strengthened by a blind, uniform, unreasoning obedience,—a fact too often ignored in the harsh times that are gone, and which the Church of Rome now more arrogantly than ever declines to recognize. We may well deprecate the hasty, and so, ineffective, legislation which comes of panic. It is a scandal, doubtless, to see brother going to law with brother, with results which are often little ancillary to the cause of Truth. But, it must be said that the permanent interests of a Church so famous, and so widely useful, as that to which it is our happiness to belong, should not be

sacrificed in perpetuity, to an unwillingness to make amenable to forbearing and gentle, but firm, disciplinary restraint, small, but apparently increasing, detachments of the Clergy, who are making rapid strides towards capitulation.

There are amongst the Ritualist Clergy those whom no one who has any appreciative perceptions of what is exemplary in character, and lofty in motive, and fervent in piety, would bear to see wantonly annoyed. The influence such men exert in an unfortunate direction, is broadened and intensified by noble characteristics,—the sincerity, the fervour, the eloquence, the self-devotion, by which they lead captive the affections, enthral the understanding, and draw after them a large and enthusiastic following. The most telling argument with the Anglican lovers of un-Anglican ritual, is the argument which is not always brought to bear by those who are not ashamed to avow themselves Protestants,—the argument, namely, which demonstrates that love to Christ, and to the souls whom He died to redeem, may find full scope, without the questionable assistance of the rites and

ritual, the investiture and terminology, of Rome. Yet it is not easy to conceive how a Church which formulates, and is only consistent as she is the advance-guard in maintaining, the nation's protest against Rome, can flourish, without some mild and reasonable hold on those in her commission, whom she sees flattering, imitating, coquetting with, Rome.

The New Tractarian Ritualist appears to sober-minded English Churchmen generally, to be taking up the *rôle* of Samson at Gaza ; though it is not an idol fane upon whose columns he leans. The polished shafts which uphold the temple, are, the truths of Christianity, freed at the Reformation from the accretions of mediæval superstition. Let the pillars yield to the pressure, and the temple,—viewed as a National Establishment,—must go headlong to sheer destruction ; for the Church of this country, while claiming to be, in the truest sense, Catholic and Apostolic, cannot cease to be Protestant, and retain her position in the confidence of a Protestant people.

The Roman Catholic is the votary of a

religion which is mainly dependent on gorgeous æsthetics: the Anglican Ultramontane adopts a form similarly and dangerously dependent. That, to our mind, is a true analogy; and we think they mistake who seek the advancement of the Kingdom which 'cometh not with observation,' or 'with outward show,' by the too lavish use of sumptuary adornment. The true advancement of the Kingdom of God upon earth must be sought in the more general diffusion and cultivation of those virtues which give stability to States, and worth to individual men.

The tendency is strong in a fallen nature, to rest in accessories, to the neglect of that which is not corruptible. The spectacular effects of ultra-ritual strongly favour the tendency; and we believe that if the Founder of an economy one of whose main characteristics is spirituality, were to appear visibly on the scene, He would remonstrate, and say with a degree of sternness, —however mixed with His own discriminating pity for worshippers who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge,—Take these things hence!

You might watch the doings of priests and acolytes, as they 'gild refined gold, or paint the lily : ' the air of the sanctuary might be redolent of incense : there might be profuseness of emblematic decoration : the sculpture might be in high relief and exquisitely moulded : a noble orchestra might fill the temple with the billowy symphonies of an inspiring or a subduing minstrelsy ; and it could hardly fail that you would feel sublimely, and be sensible of an elation akin to the rapture which thrills the most worldly-minded at a grand musical festival. And we have no right to assert that, in the midst of sensuous surroundings, there can be no genuine adoration of the Great Supreme,—no offering of a sweet savour, acceptable unto the Lord. The true worshipper may rise above all the scenic display and artistic grouping,—may find the Lord and be found of Him, in an atmosphere unfavourable to spiritual communion ; while the hypocritical and self-righteous find Him in saving presence, nowhere. There are, doubtless, points along the line of ritual, beyond which one man can go with advantage, and

beyond which another, with a mind differently constituted, cannot go without detriment. The Church of England, true to her national instincts, allows a degree of latitude in this matter of Ritual. She has laid down no hard and fast rule ; but she is emphatic and precise in her repudiation of the antichristian doctrine of Rome ; and if it were not to insinuate the doctrine which Rome distinctively holds, and against which our own Church protests ; if it were not to impress upon the popular mind, the most objectionable features of papistic worship, by the objective teaching of papistic symbolism, there would be no coherence at all, in much of the practice in ritual which it is now sought to introduce. Where ritual is strained to its utmost tension, we feel persuaded that the warning, if audibly uttered, would be recognized by many a bending devotee, as the echo of a voice which had already been syllabled by Conscience, not, at least, to mistake sentiment for sanctity,—poetry for piety,—not to forget that, while the ‘concord of sweet sounds’ may be so moving as to bring a man to the

close vicinage of tears, he may all the while be very far from God !

Christianity, though no foe to Art,—for the arts and sciences which ameliorate and embellish human life, have never made such conquests as under her reign,—is yet jealous of over-refining in the article of worship, and is not so helplessly dependent on meretricious aids as some men dream. Not now for the first time, is she to be placed upon trial of her God-given strength. Going forth in her divine integrity, she has confounded philosophers, and shamed sceptics, and awed the profane ; has aroused consciences, and throned herself queen over subjugated hearts, with no other instrument than the preaching of ‘Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.’ Her province is to testify, through oral proclamation and significative commemoration, of lapse and loss and restoration,—laying bare the degradation of the actual, that she may point to the glory of the

possible. Christianity exalts Christ, hides pride from man, and sets her face like a flint against pomps and vanities, clerical and lay. Her public ceremonial should be simple, decent, unostentatious. Christianity is a manly, reasonable, unartificial Religion, although tender enough for a mother, and gentle enough for a child; and it were a spectacle of shame, to see forced upon her in Protestant England, the harlequin disguise, in which she is travestied amongst Roman Catholic communities on the Continent of Europe, where religion is lampooned, as 'Well enough for priests and women, but unworthy the attention of practical men.'

To return to Bishop Wilberforce. His life was a championship of High Church principles;—and never, probably, have those principles been espoused and upheld by a more earnest, brilliant, and captivating apologist. But we think his views of the prerogative and office of the Christian priesthood, and of the manner in which Divine grace is conveyed through it, in the administration of appointed ordinances,

fell distinctly short of Romanism, and of all disloyalties of Anglican Ritualism. A High Church Prelate he was, as all the world knows. But Andrewes, Ken, and Beveridge were High Church Prelates: large numbers of those most illustrious for learning, for piety, for devotedness, were so, long before English Churchmen thought it consistent or expedient to borrow from Rome a histrionic ritual, much of which *she* only adopted with comparatively modern corruptions of doctrine. It is a mistake to suppose that a High Churchman of the historic school, cannot be thoroughly protestant against the distortions and exaggerations of Rome; or that his sympathies must be, in virtue of his creed, with the vagaries of an advanced and eccentric ritual. The Bishop did not view with misgiving or disfavour a fair development in its place, of a pure Anglican ritual: he intensely disliked to see a Romish ritual paraded by an Anglican priesthood on Anglican ground. In his last speech in the House of Lords, he exclaimed, '*I utterly hate and abhor the attempt to Romanize the Church of England!*' Noble

words, and worth recalling! They express with emphasis the sentiment of loyalty to the essential doctrines of the Reformed Church, in that fair understanding of them which commended itself to the Bishop's mind, as opposed to the tenets which are peculiar to the Roman Catholic Faith; and we question not that the sentiment had its home in the central sanctuary of the Bishop's heart.

Without attempting to veil the digression, we have thought the removal of one who took a leading part in all the ecclesiastical controversies of his day, a fit opportunity for the utterance of some admonitory words on a subject of much ecclesiastical importance; and for combating in our humble sphere the notion, that the great name of Samuel Wilberforce may be registered with the names of those who would go beyond the comprehensive limits within which the Church of this country expects her Clergy to keep.

Of the movement now disturbing the tranquility of England's Church, imperilling her

general usefulness, bringing into suspicion her consistency, and tending to make feasible her disruption, we can hardly hope to have spoken wholly free from the prejudice which blinds, or from the ignorance which leads astray. From going deeply into debate on the esoteric doctrine which underlies a high-pressure ritual, we have refrained. Our observations have taken the form of a protest, not of a systematic assault upon the citadel of an ultra-sacerdotalism ; the object being rather, to strengthen in the maintenance of Protestant principles, those who are yet loyal to them, than to convince or refute those who have, unhappily, forsaken them. The latter attempt could only be made, with any hope of advantage, by one familiar with the science of controversy, and in a series of set discourses. So far as we have gone, it has been our aim, without acrimony, and without malice, though the issues at stake are such as to demand some vigour of speech, to indicate what appears to us the direction of the truth. 'We speak as to wise men : judge ye what we say.' If free Ritualism, basing

itself upon Romanist models, embody anything distinctively essential to the due illustration and enforcement of Scriptural truth, as held by a Scriptural Church, it may be a misfortune or a fault,—a want of light, or a neglect to use the light vouchsafed,—but, ‘we have not so learned Christ.’ Let us indeed take heed to ourselves, that we ‘walk as children of light,’ according to the light we have; and, ‘if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.’ He is the God only wise. In His light shall we see light. All wisdom that comes not from Him is folly. Let your faith be as direct and simple as that of young Samuel on his knees, ‘Speak, Lord! for Thy servant heareth.’ ‘Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.’ If there be some excellent and amiable, but misdirected, men who weary the flesh with over-much study of obsolete rubrics, who consecrate life to the re-animating outworn superstitions, and who think it right to take up themselves, and to

impose upon their congregations, a ceremonial like to that which constituted the grievous burden of the Dark Ages of Christianity, let your nobler, more recompensing, study be, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Mere human theories in religion, however ingenious, and however attractive to minds over which they have been allowed to throw a glamour, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and when tested by the genius of Christianity, are found wanting, and must be relegated to the limbo of exploded fallacies.

Again we say, at this time of many dangers, be supremely stanch and true to the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you, and by which you will be judged at the last Great Day;—that Word which, even in its partial and preparatory revealment, he of whom the text was spoken, found to present so extensive and interesting a field for thought, that, before the dawn of day, he left his couch to resume the suspended investigation,—‘Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might be occupied in Thy Word.’ Oh, that you might be found

thus absorbed ! 'The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple ; the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' Bring to your researches the teachableness of children, the disciplined and expanded intellect of men ; and let the researches ever be accompanied by the prayer of Faith, that the Spirit may interpret for you the Word He has inspired ; and you, like the Psalmist, shall testify to the advantage,— 'Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'

We closed our last discourse with a prayer of our Church : we will close the present with a prayer of him whom the text commemorates. There is no entreaty which you should urge with more fervency of desire, when addressing yourselves to the study of the Divine Oracles, which were given to make men wise unto salvation. Present the petition in faith. Let there be docility, diligence, and perseverance on

the part of the petitioners; and the answer shall be manifest, in a growing acquaintance with the enlightening, cheering, and invigorating truths of Inspiration:—‘*Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law.*’



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SERMON III.

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SERMON III.



SAMUEL WILBERFORCE.

FAITH: SERVICE: RECOMPENSE.

ACTS XIII. 36, 37.

'For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.'



HE life of the Psalmist in its general scope and tenor, must be regarded as remarkable for a Service whose results are helpful still, and whose influence dies not out. His sins themselves, coupled with deep contritions and sharp retributions, have assumed the aspect of beacon-fires, warning off

from iniquity: his commemoration of mercy remembered in the midst of judgment, has effected that which a record of destruction would have had no fitness to accomplish; in preserving those who have been at any time overmastered by temptation, from being overwhelmed in a tideless despair.

‘The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own Heart,’—a Scripture cited by St. Paul, in the chapter of which our text forms part,—is, with the sceptic and the worldling, an oft-quoted saying; it being a presumably weak point in a Revelation professedly Divine, that the man who sinned in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, should be set forth as standing pre-eminent in the favour of God. We think the objection may be covered by the reply that the expression had its official and political bearing; and, though it doubtless implicated also a moral, was used of the son of Jesse at a period previous to his fall. There yet remains, however, the praise bestowed upon him in such passages as the text.

Well, have not those who love to make the

inconsistencies of religious men the vehicle of an illogical sneer at the Religion which the inconsistent ones profess, but from whose precepts they incontinently depart, some latent consciousness that the very circumstance which throws David's aberrations into boldest relief, is the faithfulness with which, in the main, he adhered to the everlasting covenant that subsisted between the Lord God of Israel and himself? The supreme effect upon the mind is, we take it, the effect of Contrast. A blot to be seen in all its blackness, must impinge on a hitherto immaculate surface. A dark cloud to be conspicuous, must sail over the azure of the otherwise fleckless heaven. Had not David been a righteous man, and, at the same time, one whose character, fame, and theocratic position made his doings immensely influential in the moral and spiritual sphere, he might have been less rigorously dealt with by Him who, hating all iniquity, views with peculiar jealousy, and may be expected to visit with swifter judgment, the defections of God-fearing men. For, while punishment in the case

of inveterate sinners, may be held in awful reserve, so that they are often left long undisturbed,—‘These men are wicked; yet they prosper!’—if the righteous need to be taught how sorrow-laden a thing it is to depart from the Living God, the lesson must be impressed in a scene whence instruction through the channels of Discipline, is no precluded force. ‘Judgment must begin at the House of God.’ ‘As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.’ Hence the stormy petrels which flitted o’er the foam-crested waves, amid the sombering up of David’s sky. Hence the afflictive dispensations that extorted the piteous plaints of a soul thirsting for God, from which, on account of separating sin, God veiled His Face.

Let us, then, when startled at the amazing deflections of the Psalmist, followed as they were, after a terrible interval, by restoration to God’s favour, keep in view the personal and domestic calamities which came swooping down upon him, the spirit in which he bore them, and the effect which they produced.

And, before men exercise that perverse

ingenuity by means of which they wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction;—ere they think to palliate their own sins by saying, 'We have done ill; but one of God's best-lauded servants did worse!'—weigh well the additional fact, that, under a Dispensation of types and shadows, crepuscular adumbrations of a fuller Day, the erratic course of Israel's shepherd-king was run.

'The Desire of all nations' awaited the revolution of many centuries for His Theophany. The Spirit, already given in a measure, had not formally entered upon His office. The page of Inspiration had not expanded to the completeness of its Canon. The times were 'times of ignorance,' to some extent for the Jewish, as well as for the Gentile, world.

Such considerations, suggesting that, whatever the enormity of David's guilt, it was, at least, contracted under privilege scantier than our own, might warn against the setting up in our hearts of incommensurate standards; and repress surprise that St. Paul should make reference to David as to one who, notwith-

standing sad blanks of betrayal and of estrangement, 'in his own generation ministered to the will of God.'

But, while this is so, there is much of salutary warning for us all, in that episodial wickedness which cropped out in a highly spiritual life. We cannot but remember that, in an age long anterior to the age in which David went far astray,—at a time when all the ancient Patriarchs except Noah, were alive on the earth,—'Enoch walked with God;' and, in the midst of an abandoned generation, so pleased his Maker, that he was translated without seeing death; and therefore, it is not to be denied that eminent and consistent piety—a difficult thing at all times—has never been impossible to man. We cannot but remember that David was the subject of enlightening influences, of at least equal potency with those hitherto vouchsafed to any man, whether patriarch, prophet, priest, or king; and therefore, it is not to be looked upon as aught else than a striking proof of human pervertibility, that, but for God's restoring grace,

this mighty Hebrew genius, this warrior-prophet, whose saintliness had been equalled only by his valour, had become like unto a hapless bark, through whose rifted seams rushes the impetuous tide, and which goes down with precious things aboard, in the midst of the wide sea !

At no time and under no circumstances, indeed, has God so left Himself without witness, in the realms of Nature, and in the domain of the human Conscience, that an absolute inability to discriminate between Virtue and Vice can be alleged at the last, in apology for crime. As the monarch-minstrel himself, in one of the most sublime of his compositions, exclaims,

‘The Heavens are telling the glory of God,
And the work of His Hands the Firmament declareth ;
Day unto day poureth forth speech,
And night unto night showeth forth knowledge.’

Let Conscience—that master-faculty, which, in all men, accuses or excuses—be left to the teachings of Natural Religion, unsupplemented by the most elementary notices of Revealed ;

and, save where the faculty has been long trifled with, there will be an intuition, a protest, which must be violently overborne, ere a man can 'drink in iniquity like water,' and 'sin as it were with a cart-rope.' 'There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' We do not set up any defence of enormities 'gross as a mountain, open, palpable,' which disfigure a noble life, as though they were of a kind to be glossed over with the plea of quasi-ignorance, because David was one of the many prophets and kings who desired to see those things which we see, and saw them not; and to hear those things which we hear, and heard them not. We know that David wrote under Divine guidance; and that the representations he has given of the inexcusableness of his offences, were not the overdrawn pencillings of a morbid fancy. But it is an admitted principle in God's dealings with our race, to estimate the heinousness of sin by the fulness of privilege; and if we give occasion, as the son of Jesse did, to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, now that Messiah

has appeared to condemn sin in the flesh, and to set before those who name the Name of Christ, the Ideal of His own Purity, the guiltiness with which we brand our souls is, surely, some shades darker than the guiltiness of the pre-Messianic Hebrew, who could only behold with the eye of a prospective faith, Him who should be manifested in the fulness of time, that He might destroy the works of the Devil. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.' Thus did that Divine Arbiter unto whom all judgment is committed, foreshadow His own sentence upon those who saw and heard Him in the days of His Flesh, and who believed not on His Name. Chorazin and Bethsaïda were to find the Day of Judgment less tolerable than Tyre and Sidon; the presumption being that these latter cities would have repented,—as did the men of Nineveh, at the stern proclamation of Jonah,—if the mighty works had been done in them, which the more privileged despised.

But, conclude as you may that, although

‘the Dayspring from on high’ had not visited visibly the nations, yet, forasmuch as David was exceptionally privileged with light under the Jewish Dispensation, he was in no important, practical respect, less privileged than the generality of men under the Christian ; nay, believing that a wild, uninstructed ‘child of nature,’ ‘having not the Law,’ would be so far ‘a law unto himself,’ as to stand utterly condemned at the bar of his own conscience, if he had purposed in his heart deeds so fearful as were perpetrated by David,—what is to be said of these moral solecisms in a life enriched with all blessed influences ? What, but that, ‘written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come,’ they become so much the more telling in their admonitory use ? Proving of what the holiest man is capable, if, by unwatchfulness or presumption, he tempt the Lord to relax the restraints of His grace, we see in the intensely evil and cruel things which David did, contributions to those warnings against ‘high-mindedness,’ with which the Scriptures everywhere abound,—impressive comments on the old

Bible statement, which will be true till sin and sorrow cease,—‘There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.’ The more flagrant the wrong-doing, in the instance of those who, in months past, in the days when God preserved them, set themselves to walk humbly with their God, the more irresistible the evidence that, ‘it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;’ that, so long as the World, the Flesh, and the Devil—a triple and terrible alliance!—are allowed to make on him their assault, no man can reckon himself safe but as God keeps him the while, leading him in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake. When we see *David* rushing into high-handed wickedness, his conduct should forewarn us to ‘walk circumspectly;’ to ponder with strong personal application, the Apostolic counsels, ‘Be not high-minded, but fear.’ ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.’

Meanwhile, how remarkably has God over-ruled for the benefit of subsequent generations,

these departures from righteousness on the part of His servant David! Strangely out of evil God brings good! We see it in matters physical. 'The storm-fire burns up the forest, and slays man and beast; but purifies the air of contagion.' We see it in matters spiritual. The Holy Spirit leads men to repentance and reformation; and, in the evolutions of religious life, they become more humble, more watchful, more sympathizing, more useful. 'Peter's cowardice enabled him to become a comforter; "when he was converted, to strengthen his brethren." David's crime was a vantage-ground, from which he rose through penitence nearer to God. Through it the Fifty-first Psalm has blessed all ages.' By awakening in David's breast the sentiments which found vent in penitence and prayer, God conditioned him to enrich the repertory of Scripture with a pathetic and acceptable melody, in the sweet *Miserere* of the Penitential Psalms,—those Hymns of anguish and of hope, which, in all ages since, have been caught up as the most appropriate forms of expression for erring and contrite

spirits, who would breathe out the heart's litany of confession, in the Ear of Him who 'knoweth our frame,' who 'remembereth that we are dust.'

We have been careful, speaking on the lines of a text which extols the youngest son of Jesse, to recognize in the way of argument, a feeling—not confined, in some of its phases, to the enemies of Revelation—inimical to all eulogy of a man who was betrayed into great crimes.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to go into the detail of the Psalmist's history, to substantiate what the Apostle predicates of his Service in the text. You have only to recollect certain familiar portions of Old Testament History ; you have only to recur to the most precious Book of Psalms to be found in any language, and which has now, happily, been translated into nearly every tongue ; and evidence of Service achieved by David in his own age,—conferring immense benefits upon all after ages,—will crowd upon your minds in the rapid summary of thought.

Neither may we give you a laboured demonstration that a life devoted to the service of God, and a life of true happiness, are one. In the fitness of things it must be so. That the Creator, inherently and independently Blessed Himself, intensely desires the derived and dependent blessedness of His intellectual creature, the macrocosm in its vastness, and the microcosm in its minuteness, prove,—each in its commissioned way. The mechanism of creation, so constructed as to multiply for intelligent beings, the appliances and the possibilities of usefulness, while it ministers to their comfort; and the physical tenement, exquisitely adapted to the same purpose,—in every nerve, and duct, and tendon, ‘fearfully and wonderfully made,’—evidence the desire of the Creator that Man, as the priest of creation, should be fitted to preside over the Service which all creation renders, and that the service with enjoyment should be linked. Had man continued in his uprightness, there was provision for the satisfaction of every wish that could arise within a heart that was happy because it was holy.

And when the conditions were altered, and man, in the exercise of his free agency, had brought himself into a moral state so disorganized that happiness was impossible unless God interposed, Jehovah taxed to their utmost, in this regard, the resources of His Wisdom, in planning for the restoration of felicity to the home whence it had been violently expelled. It consisted not with the Attributes which are inseparable from the Character of a Perfect Moral Governor, that, in dealing with the intelligent and responsible, He should go beyond the limits within which influence and persuasion may lawfully expatiate, and compel men to be happy in spite of themselves. But, short of this, He has given such assistance that, if man's destiny be other than glorious, it should be absolutely his own choice.

The desire for the felicity of man as a fallen creature, and therefore a creature prone to stray, is seen in the character and tendency of those Commandments by which the Creator would order the frail creature's goings, that his footsteps may not slide. These commandments

are the bulwarks erected by the Keeper of Israel, against the menaces, desolations, and miseries of sin. And 'His commandments,'—obedience to which in the spirit of Faith, we call Religion,—'are not grievous.' That they are so, is one of the chief and most successful lies of the father of all deceits. They are not grievous! They chase no innocent, healthy laughter from the dimpled cheek of Mirth. They are woven into no Draconic Statute-book for serfs. They pave no Via Dolorosa trending through perpetual gloom. They are the way in which the feet of the freeman run, and of whose delightsomeness his tongue doth jubilantly sing,—'The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' 'Thy Statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.'

Make the trial for yourselves; and you shall find that Religion does not radiate despair, nor leave its possessor derelict of joy. Religion recognizes all sides of life; exhibiting as its true counterpart, neither a funeral *cortège* nor a *fête champêtre*; neither slandering it as a waste

howling wilderness, nor misrepresenting it as a stage on which the jester may fitly detonate his jokes, or the clown throw himself into attitudes grotesque. The good man will at times be a sad man, and not always will you find him amongst the laughers. Religion blunts no sensibilities of the human, but rather, deepens and refines. Its disciples are not Stoics. If they have imbibed deeply the Spirit and intention of their Master, they are men of brotherly, sympathetic souls, who 'rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.' They have much heart-conflict, by reason of that 'law in their members,'—the half-subdued, but rebel and insurgent, will, which 'warreth against the law of their mind.' They often carry through life, as David did, the scars of former sins; and, through 'the offence of the Cross,' if they give their witness without unworthy compromise, they have trial of persecution, in those civilized forms to which the barbarous have yielded a reluctant succession, less savage in the concentration of its malice, but not less

trying, in the nature of its guerilla warfare, to the flesh. But love makes all burdens light; and to suffer as a Christian, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, is in itself no small joy. The testimony of Scripture throughout its Inspired Word, and the outcome of Christian experience is, that the holiest man is in terms the happiest; and he whose prospects are brightest for the next world, passes with serenest brow and most elastic step, along the highways and by-ways of this. Emphatically is such the case, when the life from childhood onwards, has been a dedicated and a consecrated thing. 'The Joy of the Lord,' is the believer's 'strength;' and in summoning you,—and especially those upon whom the dew of youth yet rests,—to a life of Faith; in urging you to be diligent in the study of the Bible, brave in battling with lusts, sedulous in the improvement of your talents, helpful to your fellow-man, and faithful to your God, we feel that we are not directing you to put joy into a coffin, and to go through life as mutes or mourners. Far enough from this!

We ask you to surrender no pleasure worthy of the name, or which is not in the long run bought with pain ; to resign no acquaintance worth the having ; to abandon no habit which is not a bar to intercourse with God ; to withhold not your heart from any joy to which the Lord addeth no sorrow.

Only put the matter to the test, young brethren, and well we know that the 'long result' will not prove a long disappointment. Devote yourselves, with the help of the indwelling Spirit, to the culture of your higher nature, and the spiritual eye will brighten marvellously from its ancestral eclipse. The mind being in harmony with the Mind of the Creator, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, there will be a rarer melody in 'the music of the spheres,' more thrilling cadences in the song of birds, a lovelier iris on the bosom of the storm-cloud, a warmer flush upon the damask of the rose, an added glory in the silent marchings of the stars, a more rounded and balanced happiness in all the intercourses of life. 'Made free from sin, and become

servants to God,' each hour of conscious existence will bring you tribute of a blessedness undreamt of before. Through material surface, and shrining casket, and circling shell, there will flash forth the inner beauty which lies *perdu* beneath all outward forms; and you may appropriate the familiar saying which our great dramatist puts into the mouth of the duke in the forest of Arden,

‘——this our life——’

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.’

But, it is on the words, ‘He fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption,’ that we would now fix your thoughts; for ‘that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.’ The textual allusion is to the hereditary sepulchres of the Jews, in which successive generations of the same families were interred.

It is said of Wisdom, ‘Length of days is in her right hand;’ and Religion has an obvious tendency to expand the tenure of earthly existence. But, ‘the longest day has its night,’—the

most protracted life, its term. 'The days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years ; and he died.' How, through the encroachments of sin, has man's inheritance of days dwindled to 'a handbreadth,' since this Patriarch watched the great cycles of his pilgrimage revolve ! We require registered proofs that a single century should not be discounted on the score of exaggeration now !

You marked the 'oldest inhabitant' of the village hamlet, while, leaning on his staff, he courted the sunbeam in the trellised porch of his cottage-home. You drew him on to talk of the past ; and, garrulous with age, he discoursed on events which were consigned to oblivion, or were woven into history, half a century before. Perhaps it appeared to you conversing, a likely thing that, minus all that renders extreme old age undesirable, you might live as long as he. 'Hope told a flattering tale!' Of those who, at the same moment into being sprang, where are the fifty and nine ? Echo answers, Where ? A moiety perished in infancy and early childhood ; and of the other half, some fell a prey to wasting

consumption ; some of fierce fevers died ; some became men of strength to mingle strong drink, and, at the last, it bit them like a serpent, and stung them like an adder ; some met death swiftly on the treacherous rail, in the deep mine, on the embattled plain ; others went down to the sea in ships, and found a sepulchre in mighty waters ; these died on a foreign strand, where business, or love of travel, led ; these, beneath the surgeon's knife, and these, beneath the hissing cautery of fire ; and the remnant, 'in a full age,' died tranquil in their beds. But all coevals 'this pleasing, anxious being' have 'resigned,' and he alone survives ; as you may have seen a solitary ear of corn which the harvestman has missed, and into whose retreat the October wind sighingly doth blow. Or as, of a many-turreted fortress,—once strong in fortalice, and bastion, and rampart, and buttress, and deemed impregnable in the parallels of its defence,—one slow-surrendering tower, that has been battered by besieger, and made havoc of by Time ; and on whose grey walls the faithful ivy climbs, and the moonbeam coldly sleeps !

That veteran, silverhaired, will point a tremulous finger to the mound beneath the cedars, where the wife of his youth lies buried, and tell how, one by one, the children of the household joined that silent company beneath the whispering trees, while he the hoary sire 'brokenly lives on,' 'the ancestor of a dead posterity;' and men pass him by, not without kindly greeting, and marvel that he lives so long! But human life,—take it at its longest,—it is brief. For the centenarian in his second childhood, babbles of his joyous first, as of yesterday; nay, it is a more familiar thing than yesterday to him; for yesterday's memories were all-evanescent from his mind,—childhood's fade not but with life!

Death is a charioteer whose driving,—like the driving of the son of Nimshi,—is characteristically 'furious.' And, though it may happen in your case, that his chariot may be long in coming, and its wheels may seem to tarry, at your door he will rein in his pale horses, by-and-by!

'To every man upon this earth,
Death cometh soon or late.'

You may present your bodies a living sacrifice to God ; but they must one day be sacrificed to death. You may nobly resolve with Joshua, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord ;' but there must come a Night, when life's latest task will be done : the warfare will be accomplished : like the Psalmist, you will have 'ministered in your own age to the will of God ;' and, like the Psalmist, you will 'fall asleep.' And since death is the mulct of sin, it must be, considered in itself, awful and disastrous. Yet has Christ so triumphed over death, and extracted its sting, that, as a passage to the Better Life, it holds its place as a thing of price, amongst the possessions of those who believe :—'All things are yours ; whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours.'

Homer, Plautus, and other heathen writers, used sleep as a euphemism for death. And it was not solely because of the poetry of the similitude that they did so use it ; but because men in general have a consciousness more or less distinct, that death is a slumber, from which there is to be an awakening.

The early Christians called their burial-places *κοιμητήρια*—dormitories; and we still use the derivative—cemetery—for a place of sepulture.

In Scripture, death and sleep are often used, at least in reference to God's servants, as convertible terms; and Jesus for ever glorified the simile, and consecrated it to our use, by saying of the departed brother of Mary and Martha, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' Sleep is the gift of God: Death is the gift of God. 'So He giveth His beloved sleep,' 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.' Not more grateful to the toilworn, may be 'Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,' than death, to the Christian soldier, when God bids him unclasp his armour, and gather himself untroubled to his rest. He walks through a dark valley, it is true; and all companions must leave him as he enters into the cloud. All? Nay, not all! For, as one who speaks to some familiar Friend, he gasps out with his last breath, words often admired for their poetic beauty, but never fully realized till

now,—‘ Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me : Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.’ He enters into deep waters, if you will ; but One goes with him who has fixed his trust, and whose assurance will not play him false,—‘ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.’ In the depths of this Divine Love, Lethe becomes shallow,—a silver line,—the believer may ford it with thoughts of present safety, and of the warm ovation that awaits him on the other side.

’Tis sweet so to think and to speak of death. Ay, sweet, and surely, not unprofitable ; for the wise man, knowing that he must yet voyage on ‘ that narrow sea,’ will turn his face thitherward sometimes, that he may familiarize himself with its eddies and its currents, study its ebb and flow ; see how it rises on the doubtful, and subsides for him who grasps the Promises by Faith ; and having learnt of its navigation all he can, prepare himself, with the aid of the Divine Comforter, as best he may.

But, while this is a wise exercise, and not repellent in times of stillness, to the man of faith, there are who need it and who shun it most. There are who seek in the absorptions of traffic or the whirl of pleasure, nepenthe to the thought of death. And if we have known a danger from which, believing on Him who—potentially, for all men, actually, for those who confide in Him as their Protagonist,—‘hath abolished death,’ we escape, and to which we see multitudes of our fellow-mortals still exposed, beholding the transgressors, we shall grieve; seeing in these men enemies of the Cross of Christ, and knowing that every irreconcilable enemy must be destroyed, we shall be urgent upon them to cease this wasteful warfare, and to grasp the proffered olive-branch of peace; and if they will not hear it, we shall weep in secret places for their pride!

Sirs, how can it fail to be matter of sorrowful lament, that there are amongst our fellow-worshippers, those for whom Death retains his undisable sting; and across whose path,—if they turn not from their evil way,—

he must one day stride as the King of Terrors, hateful and hating still !

Oh, that those to whom at any moment Death may come, and who are all-unprepared for his coming, might inly take the warning, as they hear it stated, even of a servant of the Most High, that 'he fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption' !

We may observe in passing, that one of the latest sermons delivered by the eloquent lips of Bishop Wilberforce, is reported to have been founded on the verse the pregnant philosophy of which we have thus informally and briefly traced. 'After he had said this, he fell asleep.' Such is the historic colophon to the protomartyr's testimony. So may we now, though with less near sequence, say of him who all but closed his pulpit ministry of power with the words spoken of David, and the like to which were also spoken of Stephen. Of Samuel Wilberforce it may now be said,—He has fallen asleep !

Brethren, it remains for each of us—unless,

indeed, we be of those who, yet untouched of death, shall see 'the Sign of the Son of Man,'—to 'fall asleep and see corruption.' It is a trite, but solemn and impressive, saying, 'We all must die.' The important question, then, is, What is to be the nature of our resurrection? Shall it be the rising again of 'the dead in Christ;' or of those unhappy beings who, living wickedly or neglectfully, and dying impenitent, shall 'awake to shame and everlasting contempt'? We exhibit, in the preaching of the Word, the two resurrections, and say unto you, Choose ye between them. 'I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life.' Ay, *choose* life! It is a matter which every man must decide for himself. Ministers, friends, kinsmen, may perform faithfully their part; but 'none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.' The Decision on which hangs Eternity, must be your own. On the arena of your instructed hearts, there is a lifelong feud between the spiritual and the carnal, between truth and error, between righteousness and un-

righteousness. And if your own breast be the theatre in which these opposing principles contend, you cannot elude the battle,—you cannot stand aside and remain neutral. Any one of you may say, ‘I will not decide who shall be my leader, whose my service, here or now.’ But not one of you can suspend the conflict; and while you hesitate to side with Christ, you side with His enemies. ‘He that is not with Me,’ says the Captain of our salvation, ‘is against Me.’ If, when the Spirit strives, and the ambassador pleads, and Christ knocks loudly at the heart, you can adopt by way of sedative to the unrest of quickened consciousness, a resolution to put off to the future, that which you are commanded, nay, entreated, to do now, you are virtually deciding in favour of the resurrection of condemnation. Moment by moment, you *are* making your election, by making yourselves meet for the resurrection of the just, or for that of the unjust. You may, if you will, choose Life: you may, if you will, choose Death. You are not the creatures of Necessity. You are not gyved and fettered by

an iron Fate. The Gospel sets forth Christ as having 'tasted death for every man ;' and if there lurk in this by no means lonely statement, no equivocal which mocks the human understanding, and seems to hold out the hope of salvation to those already marked off for perdition, Eternal Life is within the offer of you all. The Lord bids His ministering servants address you as free agents ; and if as free agents, as beings in the strictest sense accountable, each of whom is so placed and assisted, that he may achieve the destiny to which, as an immortal creature, he is invited to aspire ; and each of whom is correlatively free to ally himself persistently with evil, and to purchase for himself a heritage of woe. Will you not now and henceforth, dear brethren, take the side which life, and glory, and blessedness, and victory attend ? Surely, if you elect to perish, you cannot plead in arrest of judgment, at the Great Day of account, that you were never adequately warned. At sundry times and in divers manners, have the intrenchments of spiritual indifference been assailed.

'Life is the time to serve the Lord.' You have heard, you have seen, that, 'in the midst of life we are in death.' Of those whom you have known personally or by reputation, how many have heard the compelling roll-call of death! The young are taken away: the old are taken away. The sun of morning hides himself in premature eclipse, and the sky is suddenly darkened: the sun of evening hastes to his setting behind the purple hills. I admonish you of the prudence of assuming, without delay, the attitude of men who have their 'loins girded about, and their lights burning;' and who heedfully 'wait for their Lord.' 'Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching!' The Judge may be standing at the door; and even the faithful and prepared servant may see no sign in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath. Samuel Wilberforce, riding tranquilly over the Surrey Common, was all unconsciously in the van of that procession of travellers who throng the mysterious borderland of death. Thoughts of social pleasures to

be shared with gathered friends, during one of those brief intervals of refreshment which recur in the busiest life, gave precedence to perhaps one flashing thought of a quick passage across an unbridged River ; or rather, to the Divine escort in which the crossing might be safely made.

We know not when or where we and Death may meet ; but we know individually, that the taint of sin is upon us ; and that, whatever the channels in which our lives do run, they must debouch in death. But death is not the extinction of our conscious being. ‘ It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment.’ ‘ We must all appear—be made manifest—before the Judgment-seat of Christ.’ Before that Tribunal we must give, perforce, a strict and solemn account of things done, and things left undone, of words uttered, and thoughts cherished ; and as we pass that Audit satisfactorily, or as we break down in our defence, our eternity must be beyond conception happy, or beyond thought miserable. Where, then, is our hope of acquittal, when transgression is arrayed, and the accuser nigh,

the Tribunal inevitable, and the Arbiter inflexibly Just, if, in this life, we secure not in the Judge who shall preside, the Advocate who shall plead ?

Dear brethren, there is one hope set before you in the Glad-tidings we are urgent to proclaim :—a hope so strong that an Apostle could liken it at one time, to ‘a helmet,’ at another, to ‘an anchor.’ There is no potential force which can beat in that helmet ; though forces are to be let loose mighty enough to shatter the rocks, and shake the universe, and bow the everlasting hills. There is no possible storm which can make that anchor drag ; though there is to be a storm when the fire,—more scorching than that to which of old Egypt was a prey,—shall ‘run along upon the ground,’ and that ‘great hail’ shall fall, whose every stone shall be ‘the weight of a talent.’ The serried squadrons who throng the battlements of the sky, and form the magnificent retinue of Him who cometh with clouds : the Great White Throne, and the opened Books, and all the vast apparatus of Wrath, cannot put to shame that

hope,—the hope of those who brake away from iniquity, and laid hold on the Mediator Christ ; —is it yours, and is it mine ? In the midst of all that is fleeting and insubstantial in the present, in anticipation of all that is searching and terrific in the future, have we this expectation which makes life useful, this confidence which renders death blessed ? Conscious of higher hopes and aims than they wot of who suffer the temporal to eclipse the eternal, and the immortal to cower before the mortal, can you and I adopt intelligently the saying which ‘the natural man’ understandeth not, ‘The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me’ ? Is this the testimony which the Spirit bears as a Fellow-witness with our spirit ? Then are we a happy people : the Lord Himself is our God : He will be our Guide unto death ; and He will be our Refuge in the *Dies Iræ*,—the Day of Wrath.

Meanwhile, the unwearable life that has so suddenly reached its earthly goal, impresses upon every candidate for Immortality who can

be moved by a precept that springs out of its practice, the counsels of activity :—‘ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.’

You will remember, Christian brethren, that, on one occasion, our Ever-blessed Lord used the expression, ‘ Thou shalt be *recompensed* at the resurrection of the just.’ The first part of our text commemorates *Service*,—a service which drew its inspiration from a living *Faith* ;—the second speaks of the Resurrection, which comes charged with the fulness of *Recompense*. ‘ He whom God raised again, saw no corruption.’ It is of Jesus—God’s Holy One—that the words are spoken. Are they ‘ words of truth and soberness’ ? Then, away with all thoughts which cling to the winding-sheet and the shroud, the cerements that swathe the corpse, as we stand beside the sepulchres of the righteous ! ‘ I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others

which have no hope. For, if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.' Take Him whom God raised again, as the Representative of the late Christian Bishop, and of those departed Christian friends, of whom naught is left you but the memory and the example. In view of the Resurrection of God's Holy One, am I to weep disconsolate for my fellow-disciple, when he, too, has 'crossed the flood,' as though the suspended intercourse should never be renewed? Oh, not so! Christ is the federal Head of 'the family;' and, though He separate for a time, He will reunite its scattered members. I look upon the Lord Jesus as He goes forth to fight my battles, not only in the Wilderness, in Gethsemane, and on Calvary; but also, when He proceeds to carry on the contest in the Invisible World, and to join issue with Death where his rule was questionless before. He sinks down beneath the vials of wrath as my Representative, as the Innocent Victim on whom was visited the punishment due to my many offences; and from the fiery Baptism

wherewith He was baptized, He emerges as my Representative, and is 'declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the Resurrection from the dead.' He now addresses us from the Mediatorial Throne, to which, after sore agony and conflict, He was raised, that He might receive gifts for men ; and He assures us,—and He speaks 'as One having authority, and His word is with power, . . . Because I live ye shall live also.' Here is the assurance—the only one I need—that, as the Sepulchre of my Lord was broken, my own sepulchre shall be rifled ; and I its tenant, stirring in my narrow bed, shall obey the voice which summons the sleeping dead to life.

We do not depreciate the wonderfulness. We own the inscrutability, while we deny the incredibility. We cannot explain the mystery, any more than—to compare small things with great—we can explain how the grain shoots up from putrefaction, or the grass from corruption, or how the white blooms of spring can be the rejuvenescence of some bleak winter's dank decay. Human science and human reason

avail nothing here. Analysis and synthesis are alike at fault. The Event itself can alone pour adequate illustration upon the *modus operandi* of the Resurrection. But, from what we observe of God's doings, and of the accuracy with which His promises are wont to be fulfilled, if He say, 'I will do greater things than these,' we can believe, though we marvel the while.

Oh ! there will be joy to the righteous, when the etherealized body shall spring forth from the ruins of the sepulchre, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, and united with the soul, which has awaited its 'full consummation,' rise, a beautiful and an undecaying thing, to welcome the glorious Appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The trumpet-peal of resurrection will give the signal for the trooping together of all,—of whatever regiment, of whatever cantonment, of the Church Militant,—in whose hearts burned the love of Christ. Oh, the swarming myriads, whose tramp shall be heard in the valley and on the mountain, when the glad reveille shall awake to the Life Everlasting, those who shall have part in the First Resur-

rection! Nay, my brother, art thou still peering into the Sepulchre, wailing out thy faithless cry, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him'? Or hath thy spirit grasped the amplitude of the mighty aspiration,—to 'know Him, and the power of His Resurrection'? His Resurrection! This was the central truth of Apostolic preaching, 'They preached through Jesus the Resurrection,'—the goal of Apostolic striving,—'If by any means I might attain unto the Resurrection from the dead!'

'Now, in the place where He was crucified,'—pathetically writes St. John,—'was a garden; and in that garden a new Sepulchre.' 'What a contrast,' you say, 'between the garden, with its fresh, shining flowers, lustrous with the morning dew, and the Sepulchre, with its darkness and its death!' A contrast remarkable indeed. Yet was there an analogy not obscure between them. The garden, with its tender life, and growth, and beauty, symbolized the Tomb; the Tomb, with its mortality and evolving

change, imaged, the garden. In the one, as in the other, death was being made a postulate of resurrection. The flowers of the garden, year after year, had lived, flourished, faded into dust; yet in substance would live again. Sharon's Rose—the Flower of the Sepulchre—had sprung up, the brightest blossom that ever decked the soil over which the Curse had swept; had unfolded its petals, and diffused its fragrance, in favour with God and man;—had been rudely plucked, and hid away in the receptacle of human dust; but would live again, mantling with rich, unfading verdure, a regenerated Earth. In the garden of Eden,—while, to all outward seeming, life was in tropical luxuriance,—man died, the soul as well as the body. In the garden at Calvary,—where was the evidence of death actually undergone, and that, too, by the Prince of life,—man rises, the soul as well as the body; and the life he gains in the second garden is, beyond comparison, nobler than the life he lost in the first. In the first, he was invested with the immortality of earth: in the second, he is clothed upon potentially, with the Immortality of Heaven.

The Dreamer's pilgrim found a place 'where was a Cross, with a Sepulchre hard by.' Tread thou also that hallowed ground, that thou mayest learn at how tremendous a cost the possibility of Pardon was purchased. Yet tarry not always in the place of tombs. Seek not the Living amongst the dead. Hear the Angel say, 'He is not here, He is risen.' 'Blessed,' let us say with St. Peter, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' 'Ye,'—if really Christ's followers,—'are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' The Body of Him whom God raised again, 'saw no corruption:' the body of David 'saw corruption.' Yet is the Incorruption of the One, a certain pledge for the redemption from corruption of the other.

So long, indeed, as Death retains dominion over the body, the victory is only partial; and the dying saint, however assured of bliss, may

realize how incomplete is the victory which leaves the body, which Christ redeemed no less than the soul, stricken down, and yet unvivified, upon the field. But we gather from Scripture, that the triumph which the believer achieves when he falls asleep in Jesus, is to be eclipsed by a triumph more remote ; for, 'when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, . . . *then*, shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.' Therefore, it is not with assurances of what is experienced at the moment of dismissal from the flesh,—though that moment introduce to much that is glorious,—but with assurances of what will be experienced at the resurrection, that our Lord and His Apostles comfort the bereaved. The state which follows immediately on death, as a source of consolation, and as a motive to steadfastness, watchfulness, and holiness of life, is scarcely ever used in the New Testament : Resurrection is universally so used.

St. Paul regarded the being 'unclothed,' as an evil. He wished, if so it might be, to be

alive at the Second Coming of the Lord ;—‘ not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that our mortal part (*τὸ θνητὸν*) might be swallowed up of life.’ If this might not be granted, he was ‘willing rather to be absent from the body,’ that he might be ‘present with the Lord ;’ but his great desire was to be ‘clothed upon with the house which is from Heaven,’—that ‘building of God’ into which his spirit should be ushered at the resurrection. At death, there is for the righteous, the entering into rest,—not inactivity, much less insensibility, but rest, as opposed to whatsoever is irksome in employment ; and also rest, as implying a less energetic and uncircumscribed employment than that in which the children of the resurrection will engage.

Our Lord Himself ‘descended into the lower parts of the earth,’—as we say, when reciting the Apostles’ Creed, ‘He descended into Hell,’ that is, into Hades,—that He might undergo all the conditions of death which belong to human nature ; and also, in His distinctive capacity as Mediator, complete His victory over

Death, and 'proclaim to the spirits in safe-keeping (*ἐν φυλακῇ*),' that He was now 'spoiling principalities and powers,' and possessing Himself of 'the keys of Hades and of Death.' It was in Paradise, the happy part of Hades, that the soul of the penitent thief was with Him. In Hades it was that Lazarus was 'comforted,' and that Dives was 'tormented;' the one being represented as within sight and hearing of the other, though a chasm impassable yawned between them. It is in this region, it would seem, that all the pious dead repose, until the time of the great awakening, when the Lord shall sever, by an infinitely greater 'gulf' than that fixed in Hades, the righteous from the wicked, and determine for the righteous their various posts of honour, in that Everlasting Kingdom which is to supersede all others, and is itself to be superseded by none.

The words of our Lord to Nicodemus, are very remarkable,—'No one hath ascended up, to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.' Equally remarkable are the words

of St. Peter, quoted elsewhere,—‘For David is not ascended into the Heavens.’ ‘The souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held,’ are represented as crying from ‘under the altar,’ and they are bidden to ‘rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren . . . should be fulfilled.’ St. Paul speaks of himself and other Christians, who had ‘the firstfruits of the Spirit,’ as ‘groaning within themselves, awaiting the fulness of their adoption (*υιοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι*), the redemption of their body;’ and after he has given, in the Epistle to the Hebrews—supposing him to be the author of that Epistle—an enumeration of the worthies of old time, who, ‘having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise,’ he concludes that they ‘without us,’—that is, without those servants of God who might live after them,—‘should not be made perfect.’

These passages, and many others which might be adduced, seem not obscurely to intimate the suspended fruition of glory in reserve

for the godly, and the holding in check the full tide of fiery indignation which is to be let loose upon, and everlastingly to overwhelm, the enemies of God. So that, while it becomes us to speak, as it were, with bated breath of the conditions of disembodied spirits, concerning which so little is revealed; while we have to confess that much is left for the exercise of Faith, and little granted to the questionings of curiosity; while we are percipient of little but the shadows of our own ignorance; and while much may be said of the separate state, which may be also said of the resurrection-world,—whatsoever is realized in the former state is represented in Scripture as consistent with an intense yearning for the crisis of resurrection; and this would seem to imply that the conditions of happiness in that state are not complete, but inchoate, partial, and expectant. We seem to gather from Scripture, that a change of *locale* as well as of state, is to be experienced by those who have fallen asleep,—that a migration from a narrower scene of service to a wider, as well as a marvellous addition to the apparatus of

service, will be ours, when that which was sown a natural, is raised a spiritual, body. And if all this be, so far as it goes, nothing more than a literal presentment of what is written, we should make the Resurrection the rallying point of our aspirations, the grand source of consolation and encouragement, the constant theme of prayer, the sublime object of faith ; and so take example by the Apostles of the Lord. In times of great spiritual elevation, and also, of depression, we may overcome the healthy, natural love of life, which God has implanted within the breast, and be conscious of a real longing for the deep and rapturous repose of Paradise,—the refreshing ‘sabbath-keeping which remaineth for the people of God,’—and for that brighter discovery of Christ’s Presence than is witnessed in our earthly assemblies ; and the longing is not unlawful, unless it paralyze for present service, and assume the character of impatience and rebellion ; but, for the perfected joy, the expanded powers, the larger activities of the resurrection-world, we are taught to look as a thing within the sphere of Christian Duty ; and

we are encouraged so to pray and labour, that we may accelerate the glorious Event,—‘ looking for and *hasting* the advent (σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν) of the Day of God.’

We are now sojourners in a country on whose broad dominion ‘ the sun never sets ;’ but which is none the less darkened with sorrow, and laid waste with sin : we look to be dwellers in a Country which may know, indeed, no planetary system, no shining march of sun, and moon, and star ; yet where darkness vanishes, and sin departs, and there is spread abroad the splendour and the gladness of a fadeless Morning. ‘ And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light : and they shall reign for ever and ever.’ Material suns ! ye may be arrested in your circuit through the heavens. No longer may ye go forth as bridegrooms from Orient chambers, and rejoice as strong men to run a race. Stars ! ye may fall from your orbits, as the untimely fruit from the fig-tree, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. Moons, satellites, constellations—bright garni-

ture of present systems ! ye may not deck the firmament of the Future. Yet will a more winsome light than that diffused by rejoicing sun, and silver moon, and starry host, through tracts of the material creation, make surpassingly radiant the City whose foundations are of the jasper and the sapphire ; for 'the glory of God doth lighten it, and the light thereof is the Lamb.' That City is the 'New Jerusalem,'—the Metropolis of the 'New Heavens and New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' The walls of that City never crumble : the towers of that City never fall : the glories of that City never fade. All citizens within its gates of pearl are holy, all faces happy, all hearts content. In its streets,—those 'streets of shining gold,'—funeral processions never remind of mortality, nor move to tears. Very glorious are the words of one who, 'in the spirit,' beheld, from his lone isle of banishment, the abode of comeliness, security, and peace,—
'And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I

heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new.' Oh, amazing destiny for members of an apostate race, to have such a City to dwell in, and for their Ruler the Lord God; and to have no more the things which for a while made the spirit desolate, and the world drear, and the light in the heavens dark;—the chilling blast of adversity, the wasting sickness, the threshold crossed by Death, the crying and tears of a feeble folk tried and chastened sore! Destiny amazing, but not unattainable, for the apostate have been restored, and to the sinful and the sad has come home the sweet sense of pardon; and Jesus speaks the word which Reason can only wonder at, but which Faith

learns to take trustingly,—‘To him that overcometh will I give to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne!’

It has been our endeavour, Christian brethren, in addresses, the last of which now draws towards its close, while not confining ourselves to such trains of thought as might distinctively illustrate the life of Bishop Wilberforce, to limit ourselves very much in our references to him, to the broad facts which are before the world. We have not stood forth to commend or to condemn what was peculiar to a party in his theology: we have not presumed to give an estimate of the general effect of his teachings upon the religious Thought of our day. We have simply desired to stir you up to zeal and earnestness, by the exhibition of these qualities in another; and to warn you of the danger of Delay in spiritual concernments, by reminding you of that sudden Call which has come to him, and the like of which may come to you. We have indulged the hope that there



might mingle with admiration of an illustrious character, and thankfulness to God, who allowed that character to grace our Communion for a time, a generous resolve so to acquit yourselves in your several spheres of Duty, that, when you are taken away, you may 'fall asleep' with the united testimony of Conscience and the Spirit, that, through the grace of God which has been with you, you have not lived in vain.

'Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God!' So, at the commencement of His earthly course, spake the Divine Jesus. 'My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.' So spake He as that course He ran. 'Father! I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.' So spake He at its close. Brethren, 'He has left us an Example that we should follow His steps.' And mark! 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the Will of God, abideth for ever.'

May the Lord the Spirit so energize and inform this foolishness of preaching, that it may

commend itself to the hearers as a message from on high! If He condescend so to deal with the words of the preacher, they may become in your experience, as 'the words of the wise' which 'are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.' The nail from the tent of Jael, and the hammer in the hand of a woman, freed Israel from the oppressor, when the sharp sword of Barak failed to crown the victory by the slaying of Sisera. The sling and the stone which a shepherd lad could wield, humbled in the dust of death the defiant Philistine of Gath, when the unproven panoply of Saul was set aside as useless. The earnest reference of a little captive maid, to 'the Prophet that is in Samaria,' led to the cure of a great warrior's leprosy. Even thus, in the moral world, it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts,' that there is to be a casting down of the empire of Satan, and an erecting on its ruins of the Empire of Jehovah, 'whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom

that which shall not be destroyed.' It is only as the Divine Spirit blesses a Divine Ordinance, that Preaching can work mightily in human souls, producing in them penitence and faith. Paul might plant, and Apollos water, and unless God gave the increase, each process of spiritual agriculture would be found barren of fruit in the mellow Autumn time, when the yellow grain should wave. But, if that which is figured by the planting and the watering be done in faith, the least skilful of those who engage in the moral tillage, while acknowledging dependence, may expect success,—' He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

Brethren, the biographies of those who, 'in their own generation, ministered to the will of God,' enforce the written Word. And therefore may the memorials of conspicuous individuals who, in their day, were living epistles, known and read of all men, be good to study. But let us not forget that the study, in whatever degree

it awakens interest, should be fraught with profit,—certainly entails responsibility. In no mere efflorescence of sentiment should the effect of such contemplations as those in which we have engaged, be allowed to evaporate. The laborious career of this man of God, has been run in vain, so far as we are concerned, if it prove not a stimulus to more thorough consecration, and more hallowed zeal. The Bishop's bright existence, when interpreted aright, is rich in incentives to go forth into the earnest and working world ; and to 'serve,'—up to the full measure of individual opportunity, strength, and endowment,—'the Will of God.' Do this ; and you will be of those who best honour the Bishop's memory : do this ; and you will be of those who, with him, 'when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice ; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.' 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord ! Lord ! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the Will of My Father which is in Heaven.'

Samuel Wilberforce, now that he has exchanged the joys and sorrows of pilgrimage, for beatific Rest in the Paradise of God, if he were yet cognizant of what passes on this lower stage, would hold it of comparatively trifling account to see men joining in the processional pageantries of woe, and bending sorrowfully over the sarcophagus that has swallowed up his dust. It were little to him to witness the intertwining of cypress and laurel, and the scattering of immortelles, the rearing of the stately cenotaph, the chiselling of the breathing marble. He might look coldly on 'storied urn, or animated bust.' It might fail to stir powerfully the chords of his spirit, to know that, in many a House of God, the eulogy is passed, and the loss depicted, and the virtue extolled, and the tribute of tears given in eloquently silent flow, to the memory of a chief Pastor who is gone. But it were indeed to add yet another wave to the tide of his blessedness to know that, from one penitent heart, there ascends the impassioned, believing prayer, which ever brings down the supplicated assistance and

blessing, 'Lord, help me to follow this man as he followed Christ,—to live as he lived, with a consciousness of Thy Presence,—“as ever in the Great Taskmaster's Eye;”—help me, oh, help me, by Thy Spirit and by Thy grace, in this mine own age, to serve Thy blessed Will!’ If the spirit of the departed Prelate could leave

‘That undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns,’

and go abroad among the churches to-night, it is to this Divine Service that he would seek to animate their congregations. But they need not to be wrought upon by a messenger from the world of spirits. ‘If they hear not Moses and the Prophets,’—if they hear not Evangelists and Apostles,—if they hear not the Gospel of the Blessed God,—‘neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’ But, while he who is now elsewhere, cannot revisit the world he has left, with materials for ‘mild heat of holy oratory,’ such as haply never softened into penitence the hard hearts of obdurate men,—from the blest estate to which

he has attained at a bound, he addresses himself to every listener, in tones which will scarcely permit inattention. His voice is now added to that mighty Chorus of voices, which may be heard by the quick ear of Faith, above the strife of tongues, amidst the tumult of battle, and the concussion of antagonistic beliefs :—
‘Quit you like men, be strong, . . . be patient; stablish your hearts: for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh!’

Spirits of the departed righteous, who now repose in beautiful Peace, not in vain shall ye call! From the broad battle-field of life,—the scene of your spiritual exploits, on which ye, earnestly contending, gloriously fell, and where we yet strive for the mastery,—with one heart and one voice, we give back answer to the challenge that ye send :—

‘We will, we will, brave champions be,
In this the lordlier chivalry!’

In no vain confidence in the flesh, but in reliance on that Grace which, if it be forced upon none who superciliously despise it, is with-

held from none who importunately seek it, let the response be given. Let but the principle of a higher spiritual life be implanted, and daily nourished within us, and our pilgrimage on earth will be spent to holy and useful purpose, and we, too, shall die the death of the righteous, and our last end shall be like his. When flesh and heart fail, and earth departs, and the ministering forms of those we love grow phantasmal by reason of the deepening gloom, the inner eye may be opened to behold celestial visitants going to and fro in mystic beauty, preparing to carry us, as they carried Lazarus of yore, with beat of silvery wings away. Things temporal departing as a scroll, things eternal rushing into view, we shall identify the chamber of death with the vestibule of a Life that is Immortal. A hush coming on all earthly minstrelsy, strains of music from a loftier sphere may steal upon the dulled, yet quickened, sense; and we shall have 'a Song, as in the Night'!

May it be given to all of us, so to Behold the Lamb of God; so to believe in Jesus Christ our Lord; so to turn intuitions, feelings, convictions

into settled principles, by evermore embodying them in the actualities of a holy life, that, when the time comes for us,—lo, it shall come!—as it came for David, as it came for Samuel Wilberforce,—to ‘fall asleep,’—to be ‘laid unto our fathers,’—to ‘see,’ and be ‘sown in, corruption,’—we may anticipate with a confidence which cannot be shaken, and in the heart of which there will be a deep and solemn Joy, the awakening with the Saviour’s likeness—‘We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him!’—and being satisfied therewith;—the being ‘raised in incorruption’!

‘In his own generation, he served the Will of God:’—such is the Divine witness to each good man’s rounded life. Sweet Spirit, grant us this witness, when our brief and busy day doth close! Meanwhile, ere we go our way, and join the ‘great majority,’ ere we flit behind that impalpable Curtain which folds up the Future from mortal ken, and solve by experience, each one for himself, that strange problem and mystery of Death, let our heart be the

home of FAITH, our life unreserved in the currencies of SERVICE. For such, through Jesus the Forerunner, the RECOMPENSE is sure,—‘ An inheritance *incorruptible*, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.’

‘ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.’



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